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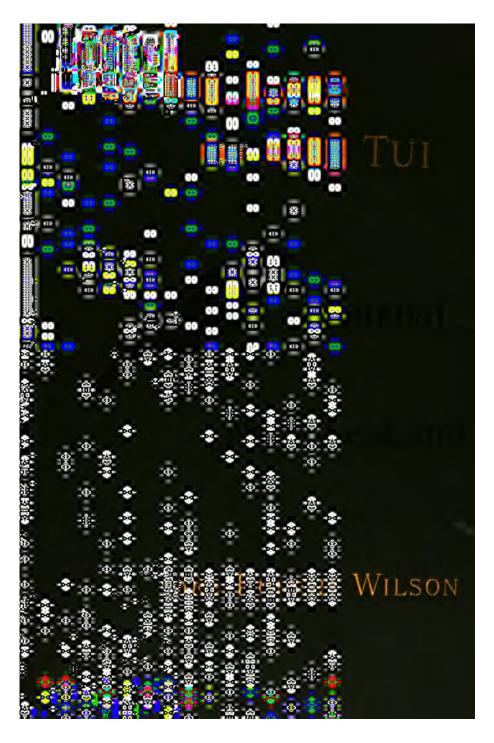
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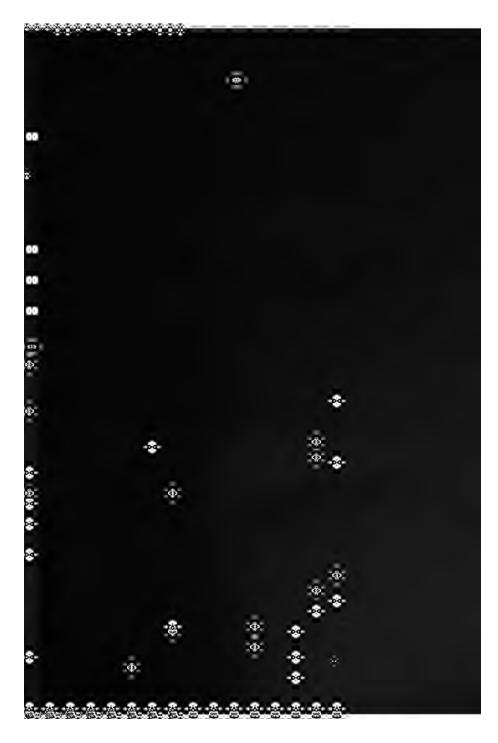
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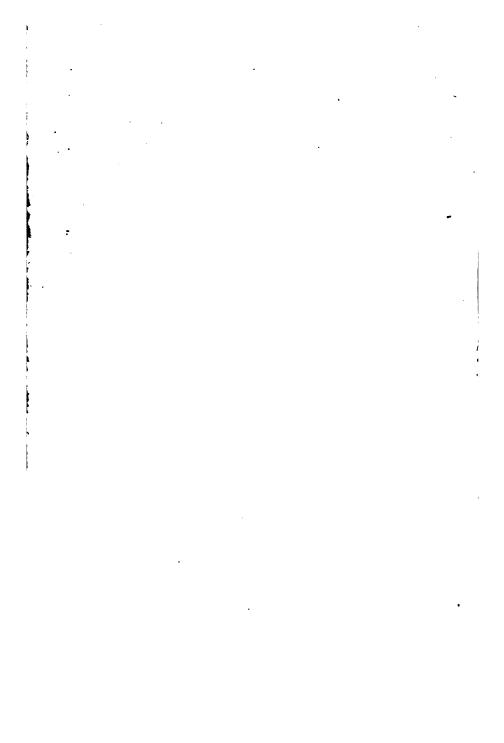
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# IN THE LAND OF THE TUI.

MY JOURNAL IN NEW ZEALAND.

BY

MRS. ROBERT WILSON.

"Where summer has no date."

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

in tondon:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & COMPANY

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### INTRODUCTION.

I have often wondered why I had neither heard nor read of the Tui before going to New Zealand, for now the thoughts suggested by its name make me ashamed to have been so ignorant. Would that I could have adequately told how this lone bird's song enraptured me! for I know, in the years to come, Memory's echo of its wild sweetness will bring back the loveliness of the forests where it has its dwelling-place, and I wish that some of its haunting cadences could be shared by those sympathetic readers who may be interested enough in that far-distant land to peruse this, I hope not too personal, record of our happy sojourn there.

Trite and commonplace though it may be to

offer apology ere opportunity has been given to discover shortcomings, I must use that time-honoured weapon of defence against the ubiquitous critic, for all who take up my journal may not regard travel as the acme of human enjoyment; some may even resent the very frequent descriptions of landscape with which it is filled, and it is probable that long ere the end be reached, a wish may arise in inquiring minds for more numerous facts to relieve its monotony. To gather such gleanings, ambitious readers, you must go further afield, and search among the various already well-known and able books on New Zealand, many of which contain sufficient data to satisfy even a Colonial secretary.

You who wish to study any special condition of this country, such as its science, politics, or commerce (subjects so skilfully treated by competent writers), I refer to these authentic sources.

You who love Nature more than Blue Books, I ask to come with me to the Wonderland that lies beneath our feet when we tread this older world, and to wander through the beautiful years from which everything that was unlovely has vanished now; for Memory, smoothing out all the creases there, has left only fadeless pictures of the glorious home of the Tui, where autumn is a lingering of sunshine with no sadness of falling leaves, winter but a name, spring the magician who conjures a bewildering largesse of miracles, and where that pervading season which will not let itself be forgotten through all the year, in fitful defiance of calculation and calendar, reigns supreme, so tempering the air of these Islands that the disheartened voyager from ruder climes exultingly can say: "Here at last is the land I have hitherto sought in vain, the land of my waking dreams. need for me to sail beyond these halcyon shores, 'where summer has no date'?"



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#### ODE TO THE TUI.

Magical bird!
In forest solitude
Thy voice is heard,
Through shine or shower, in leafy bower,
Fearless where none intrude.

Far hast thou flown,
And brief thy lay and fleet;
Love thou hast known,
For all thy song seems borne along,
By memories keen and sweet.

When sunlight fair
Pierces the shade, and glows
Through all the air,
The drowsy wood, in quiet mood,
Is hushed to charmed repose.

But hark! a sound;
The sleeping trees are stirred,
And glooms profound,
With silence filled, thy song has thrilled,
O silver-throated bird.

One pure, clear note,
Then tuneful melody
Not learnt by rote,
But with delight, from morn till night,
Sing'st thou thy soul away.

How hast thou found
The secret of the wood?—
For, far around,
The listening air thy tale did bear,
But few have understood.

Joyous and sad
Thy witching strains are still
Plaintive or glad,
And carol high, or lullaby,
All songs are thine at will.

How thou art blest!

To sing is all thy care;
And for thy nest
A sylvan glade, with screening shade,
Deep in the woodland fair.

Through blissful day
Thou warblest clear and strong;
Then wing'st thy way,
And naught is heard, O darkling bird,
Save echo of thy song.

Heart of the hill,
Dream of the wood, awake!
Sing to us still,
Fair spirit free, of fern and tree,
Sweet soul of bush and brake!

TO MY SISTERS.

"Last, loneliest, loveliest, exquisite, apart,
On us, on us the unswerving season smiles,
Who wonder 'mid our fern why men depart
To seek the Happy Isles."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

### IN THE LAND OF THE TUI.

#### CHAPTER I.

#### ACROSS VAST LEAGUES OF SEPARATING SEA.

"How oft we saw the sun retire,
And burn the threshold of the night,
Fall from his ocean-lane of fire,
And sleep beneath his pillar'd light!
How oft the purple-skirted robe
Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
As thro' the slumber of the globe
Again we dashed into the dawn!"
TENNYSON.

June, 1889. Under the trees at home.—"Going away for three years to the other side of the world!"

These words repeat themselves in my thoughts over and over again, for it seems as though it cannot be of me they are saying this thing.

From early childhood in theory I have been a Bohemian; to go everywhere has been my one passionate longing; but, as experience so often proves,

when fulfilment is near, doubts, unfelt before, assail on every side. I think I wanted to take my world bit by bit, not to have such a huge slice thrust upon me all at once. In my dream-travels time of course was no object; I went and stayed as it seemed good to me (we do this in our imaginings), and I always came back with no needless delaying to tell my dear ones how I had fared in those far dream-countries, and how I had thought of them on the trackless seas; but now there is nothing vague nor illusory in the definite programme of a three years' exile, which appears to me an eternity. If I go I will stay to the-I was going to say bitter-end, but why should I anticipate evil? Is it too much to ask of Fate that life shall go on for each one I leave, as of yore, and that when I return for my welcome, like the prince in the fairy tale, I shall find, "Here all things in their place remain;" no deeper lines of care, no missing faces? Ah me! why should immutability be theirs because I go across the sea? We are too prone to think ours is the magic touch that will waken old interests, and clear paths that have been long o'ergrown; and though such egotism is futile against the influences of chance and change, we still fondly trust that, however the years deal with us, to those we love life may be perennial spring.

"Care and pleasure, hope and pain,"

come to all, and I must e'en expect this decree for others as for myself, with the indelible marks of Time that rides roughshod over all we cherish, pitilessly taking our treasures with a right none can gainsay.

July 30, "Leagues and leagues beyond,"—Three days ago the guns were thundering to celebrate the marriage of the Princess Louise of Wales and the Duke of Fife, as we were leaving the old country, and beginning our six weeks' voyage with New Zealand for our destination, and the wonders of the Antipodes at the end of our enforced captivity. At present it still remains to be proved whether the delights of sight-seeing, or the varied experiences of travel in other lands, can compensate for the feeling of dread ever present with many who "go down to the sea in ships." I am one of these timorous beings, and share with Johnson the abject opinion, that a vessel is only a prison with a chance of being drowned.

Upon the pain of parting I need not dwell. Memory holds those bitter hours in her own deep cup, which must be drained to the dregs each time she so wills; but their sorrow need not be chronicled here, where the record is to be of fleeting impressions and passing fancies, of momentary

pleasures and the thoughts each day brings forth and this would be marred by the shadow of a lasting ache that neither time nor change can heal, and nothing soften save the hope of a glad meeting. But in all the heartfelt sadness of leaving home, the one bright prospect, that we three, B., Gwladys, and I, are to be together, has given us infinite comfort.

July 31. On deck.—When I think how much has been written about the sea, I put my pen aside in despair; yet, remembering how many distant scenes are recalled by a few words jotted down while the pictures were still fresh and vivid, I take it up again, believing that some day I may not regret that I have noted my point of view of what is now occurring, and of all I shall see in the near future, if only for the satisfaction of conning it over when time shall have dimmed the colours from my mind.

With a bright sky and a placid sea, our good ship Rimutaka has started on her long voyage of nearly thirteen thousand miles. Plymouth Sound, basking in the sunlight, seemed fair to us; never fairer than to the sad eyes that will gaze on other scenes for many days ere they behold again the dear homeland.

As we dropped down to our yacht-like steamer, we were much struck by her aspect. When viewed from the distance, her build seemed to combine strength with beauty of form and line, and on closer inspection we find nothing to contradict this impression. Spacious quarters in the deck cabins, and a knowledge that the vessel is not over-crowded, help to reconcile us to our present experiences.

For the first few days on board life did not seem greatly worth living, for that most potent of ills to which a voyager is heir attacked me; and only by adhering to a recumbent position, and becoming, so to speak, dead to the world, could the sea-fiend be repulsed, and finally worsted. I was rather jealous of B., who is always absurdly well on these occasions, and even Miss Mein and Gwlad had crawled out on deck before I was able to do so, but my maid seems disposed to make the best of a long sojourn in her cabin. I am aware we ought to have shown a braver front to the common enemy, for the sea has been smooth, and the Bay of Biscay calm as the proverbial mill-pond. The delight of being once more capable of enjoying life, however, almost compensates for the period of misery from which so few are exempt.

Given a pleasant party, and a captain who considers it one of his duties to be sure that his passengers have comfort and amusement, there is generally

material on a voyage for an agreeable time, always providing the weather be favourable. We are glad the *Rimutaka* has these conditions, and we congratulate ourselves on having sailed with Captain Greenstreet. The steamer has a large poop-deck, where, under an awning covering it from end to end, there is dancing in the evenings. With music and games of all kinds, the days are passing, and now we are beginning to feel a stir of excitement at the thought of again nearing land, the island of Teneriffe, five days distant from Plymouth, where our coalsupply is to be augmented.

August 1. Leaving Teneriffe.—We arrived at midnight. Our stay being limited to twelve hours, we had proposed to be up with the lark, or any other matutinal bird that haunts the island, and had resolved to make as much as possible of our brief visit.

The sudden stopping of engines was a delightful sensation, and immediately afterwards we heard the strange chattering of Santa Cruz colliers, who had brought up alongside in the small hours. Being so near land, I slept the sleep of the just, with the feeling of security that I never experience on the open sea. In the dark I am a prey to all sorts of

vain imaginings, and though the loud noises that are constantly repeated on every side tend somewhat to reassure, many of them are jarring enough to murder sleep effectually, and my only solace is in the knowledge that people are astir and the watch alert. Cries of sailors, banging of blocks, rattling doors, creaking woodwork, holy-stoning decks, swishing water, and, above all, the bos'un's whistle, like a wild bird's shrill call, are, I find, with many other uncanny sounds, the nightly recurring amusements on an ocean-going steamer.

This morning we were called at five o'clock, and cager was the rush to doors and ports to see Mother earth again. On one side lay the town of Santa Cruz, nestling coyly at the foot of noble mountains. The long, straight, barn-like houses, with their greenshuttered windows and bright, red-tiled roofs, had an essentially Spanish appearance, and the sickly odour of garlic which pervaded the atmosphere was also typical.

On landing, we found our way first to the market, a busy scene already, though the hour was yet so early. There, in the uncovered court, were displayed all kinds of vegetables and delectable fruits; and outside, spread upon the earth, was a profusion of glass, china, and other merchandise, exposed for sale by men clad in the picturesque

Teneriffe blanket, which, in addition to other garments, they were pinned over the chest, and did not seem to find too oppressive, even though the weather was so sultry.

After inspecting the market, wishing to lionize, we hired a curious, ramshackle carriage, to which three mules were harnessed—a novel but most necessary method, for even this trio did not prove quite equal to one good English horse; and when they mounted the steep sides of the hills to La Laguna, our driver was frequently jeered by fellow-Jehus on the exceeding sluggishness of his team. The favourite means by which visitors reach the little, hill station is on donkeys; but I think ours was the safer, if the slower, way. For the first few miles of that hilly drive the country was bare and bleak, burnt up with excessive heat; but further on, signs of cultivation began to crop up, such as fig-trees, and the cactus grown for the insect from which cochineal colouring is made. At length, having climbed so high, and when we seemed to be driving almost into the clouds, we reached the outskirts of La Laguna, a favourite sanatorium for the invalids of many nations, and also a summer resort for the people of Santa Cruz, when the exhalations in their own town become too pronounced.

A quaint, old-world little settlement, full of

churches and priests; once an episcopal centre where, as some one remarked, "all the praying for the island had been transacted." A beautiful marble pulpit embellished one of these churches, but I did not see much more that appeared worthy of note.

John Bull, of course, was en evidence.

I wonder if it ever occurs to a certain species of the travelling Englishman, on pleasure bent, what a Goth he must seem to men of other lands?

He is usually one of a large party, and the happy possessor of Cook's tickets, with which he is able to besiege every place, and "do it" thoroughly. He always walks in the middle of the street, with his head well thrown back, an attitude which tilts his nose aggressively. He enters churches at any and all hours of the day, and regarding every creed, save his own, as profane and out of date, is certainly not deterred from expressing his opinions of them by any delicate scruples, but simply because he cannot speak the "senseless jargon" of the country in which he finds himself. All languages except English he bitterly resents as personally insulting, and imagines that by shouting loudly enough in his own vernacular, even these "benighted natives" will understand.

For the honour of England, be it said, this type is not so common now as we are led to suppose it was formerly, and were it not for the well-nigh exhaustless courtesy of foreigners, it would be obsolete; owing to better education and freer intercourse, it is becoming rarer every day.

One cannot avoid noticing that a distinct feature of Teneriffe is the whining beggar, with his outstretched hand and piteous cry: "Limosna por l'amor de Dios!" by which the unwary stranger is at once entrapped. Unfortunately, my heart had been hardened against this wily pleading in Spain, where mendicancy is carried on so successfully that I myself have seen one of these vagrants actually take from his pocket a handful of coin, from which to give change for a peseta to a charitably disposed señorita, in a street of Toledo!

I shall not soon forget the panorama around us as we looked from the flat roof of the hotel, whither we had betaken ourselves after a not too appetizing breakfast. The little town of La Laguna, from its height, commands a wide sweep of land and ocean. On one side we saw, towering above his fellows, the majestic Pico de Tiede (13,000 feet); on the other, the sea, shimmering and distant; beyond again the clouds, in a long serrated line, over which peeped the mountains of the Grand Canary, the whole scene more like a glorious mirage than the stern realities of rock and wave. It was a strange and weird effect,

impossible to reproduce, but it fixed itself indelibly on my memory. A scorching drive, under an almost tropic sun, brought us down again to Santa Cruz.

We were much gratified to know that we had come to Teneriffe too late for a festival that had taken place a few days before, to commemorate a victory of which the islanders are extremely proud—the defeat of Nelson! To English ears this sounds slightly apocryphal, but it will be remembered that the hero suffered a repulse at Teneriffe, with the loss of his arm, as well as of two very diminutive flags, which the Santa Cruzians exhibit with great triumph.

We attempted to make some purchases, but found it rather a hopeless business. The salesmen either could not or would not comprehend our wants, and looked as stolid as the Spaniard of the time-honoured tale, who, when asked if he sold a certain book, remarked with the utmost indifference: "Dios sabe!"

August 3. Nearing the Tropics.—And now that the little excitement of our visit to Teneriffe is over, there is nothing to anticipate, save monotony, for a fortnight, when we hope to reach Cape Town.

In the old sailing days two weeks must have seemed a very short period out of the six-months' voyage then so usual; but now, when swift steaming is the rule, even the briefest over-time is regarded as a hardship. And yet out of the very monotony is evolved a certain amount of variety, for whatever may be our feelings within these iron walls, the elements that surround them, and which seem illimitable, are never the same. Sea and sky, though so changeless, are changing ever, and revealing new wonders, or perchance new terrors, day by day.

Now above it may be all fair and cloudless, and beneath a tranquil sea, rich and darkly blue, a blue found only in deepest oceans. Again, the skies are overcast, a squall is meeting us, and our good ship is courtesying over dull grey waters.

There are moonlight nights that seem like day, only sadder, when the stars are peeping over our mast-heads, and the ocean is rocked in a hushed repose; and nights, too, when the heavens are angry and sullen, and there is no hope in the wild black clouds, while the surging, curling waves, that have forgotten all their gentleness, are full of cruel mockery and infinite unrest. Then come days when the ocean looks calm as a field of standing corn, yet our vessel will roll from side to side like a helpless craft; and as we look out towards the horizon, we see the oily swell that bears her as restlessly along as the breakers she may be ploughing ere the sun has set.

August 12. In the Tropics.—By taking the direct passage to New Zealand, the actual time in the tropics is comparatively short; but life would indeed be a doubtful pleasure had it to be spent in such latitudes, for a sickly moisture in the air hangs round the ship like leaden weights, and some of us cannot help thinking wistfully of heather and grouse, and fresh, moorland breezes, at this trysting-time in the "north countree!" At noon, crossing the equator, we stood on the scorching deck, where my sensations reminded me of those of poor Peter Schlemihl, after he had sold his shadow to the devil. We passed shoals of porpoises, the sight of which only prompted a slight twinge of jealousy that they could splash about, and so playfully disport themselves in the water, while we limp and inert mortals could have no such alleviation of our lot. The lack of physical energy communicates itself to our minds, in which there is a strange vacuity. It is useless to fight against this lethargic condition, which seems to attack most people on a prolonged voyage; for if it were possible to "pull one's self together" for a lucid interval, it would certainly be interrupted by the conversation of some one who had not been so fortunate. The weekly delight of diving into the "wanted" boxes becomes a positive misery in the tropics.

Happily the intense heat does not last, and when it is over, the daily avocations are resumed; the usual routine being quoits and cricket during the day, and dances in the evening.

There are those amongst us who indite volumes of description, and a faithful copy of the daily "run" from the chart, to send to the long-suffering relatives left behind. These indefatigable correspondents are usually amateur travellers, and are realizing, for the first time, that latitude and longitude have more significance than that of mere geographical terms, but have not yet discovered the fact, that unless there is a shipwreck, or something equally exciting to record, the doings of a number of idle people on a steamer—or indeed anywhere else—are apt to lack interest to far-off readers.

#### CHAPTER II.

"THE GLOWS AND GLORIES OF THE BROAD BELT OF THE WORLD."

"Unto the farthest flood-brim look with me;
Then reach on with thy thought till it be drown'd.
Miles and miles distant though the last line be,
And though thy soul sail leagues and leagues beyond,—
Still, leagues beyond those leagues there is more sea."
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI.

August 17. Leaving Africa.—"Rolling down to the Cape" is a short, graphic, and true description of this voyage; the worst part of it being reserved for the day before entering Table Bay. Here the cross currents are so numerous that no exact system of rolling is maintained; a kind of corkscrew motion prevails, upon which dependence cannot be placed, for no sooner have the bewildered passengers become accustomed to one form of this upsetting entertainment, than it is forthwith changed to another, which completely overthrows both equilibrium and dignity, and performs the strangest antics with the unmanageable limbs of its victims.

Table Mountain at length loomed up before us, happily uncovering his square and flattened head, so that we could appreciate his noble proportions. The first view of Cape Town affected me strangely. There seems something so curious in a settlement of men and women right on the world's edge. It is as if those early pioneers had stood for a space to gaze on the pathless waste of water, which was to them less formidable and unknown than the untracked wildernesses of this great land of promise, that would draw them later by the strength of its vastness, and the longing there is in human souls to penetrate an immense Silence, and to reach the Ever-beyond.

Africa! The very name is one by which to conjure.

How perfectly inadequate to satisfy our desires were the few hours we spent on the threshold of this grand continent, was vividly impressed upon us by even the little we were able to see.

A real Tantalus cup to me was the hurried drive, in a delightful Cape cart, to High Constantia, where, being winter, there were of course no grapes upon the vines, so largely grown there for wine-making. Acres of bare vine-rods, and some empty vats and presses in a long shed, were all that spoke of an industry which must be exceedingly active in the

autumn months. We were told that Kaffirs crush the juice out of the grapes with their feet, and, while walking round and round in the presses, sing a monotonous sort of chant, and thus mark time to their treadmill-step.

The fairest flowers of myriad hues, growing on all sides, made us wonder how any more beautiful could be left for summer's blooming, since this lavish profusion decked the winter ways.

Hedges of cactus, fields of narcissi, the lovely Nile lily with its waxen cup and glossy foliage, bestrewed bank and roadside, purple heath and white-flowering willows and mimosa, the stiff protea with its heavy head like a brown bird's breast, and many other clusters and brilliant blossoms, met our sight at every turn.

There was something stronger than the ordinary fascination of new places, with the fresh ideas they suggest, which wrought its spell on me in this peep through the half-open door whose portals I might not enter.

Beyond lay the land, that although so young in history, is yet so old in tragedy, through which the legions of armies have tramped that will never more return, where the old, vexed questions of the race's rights have been answered in such strange wise, and the brave hearts and high courage of the questioners for ever stilled—the land of Isandl-whana!

August 19. In the Southern Ocean.—Our last glimpse of Table Mountain showed us the glow of sunset gradually creeping up from base to crown, bathing it in a film of powdered gold, but when we had steamed out of the bay the light had gone, and darkness had settled down over the water, the lonely water that we are now to cross.

To those of us who are prone to superstition, an occasion for its indulgence arises. We are in the track of the Flying Dutchman, the poor belated ship that has been trying in vain for centuries to round the Cape. As night falls we stop suddenly, and in the morning we are told that a sailing vessel, to which the Rimutaka of course gave way, had passed our bows. We, who are of a romantic mind, remember the spectre ship, and, after what we are pleased to consider such an unlucky encounter, look forward to all manner of mischances! Happily most people are prosaic, so our grim anticipation does not obtain much sympathy. Meanwhile our thoughts are turning to the long stretch of ocean that lies between us and Tasmania, which, judging from the frequent experience of others, will not be monotonously calm.

B. and I have come to the conclusion that though

deck cabins may be comfortable enough in good weather, they are not desirable habitations with half a gale of wind whistling through every available entrance, water rushing over the floor, doors banging, and, to add to the prevailing confusion, portmanteaux and cabin trunks, animated by the Spirit of Misrule, engaging in an exciting game of general post round the very limited area which was not allotted to them. This has been our daily endurance in the rough weather we have had since leaving Cape Town.

We have to pay dearly in discomfort for the rare feast of grandeur spread before us: a booming sea, translucent and many-coloured, liquid sapphires and emeralds under the broken crests, whitest foam lacing the valleys between the sea mountains into a network of gossamer, while overhead, piled masses of sky-mountains rise, range beyond range, against the distant blue, and, in their turn, are lost to sight behind a dark grey curtain of snow and hail, as a sudden squall breaks over the troubled ocean. And through it all we speed, leaving the blue, and hurrying into the storms that are awaiting us, knowing not what even an hour may bring of turmoil or tempest.

August 22. With the islands in our wake.—This morning the Crozets were sighted on our starboard bow, first the large island, then the Twelve Apostles,

which put me greatly in mind of the Needles. They are picturesque but desolate-looking rocks, situated in much too inclement latitudes to be peopled. A few survivors from the *Strathmore*, a vessel wrecked on the coast, inhabited them for six months, and, until they were rescued from their miserable plight, had to exist upon sea-birds' eggs.

I have never seen so many nor more beautiful wild birds than we have had round the ship since leaving Cape Town:

"They and the sea are surely kith and kin."

The lordly albatross, grey, white, and "sooty;" molly-mawks with their soft white breasts and tireless wings; tiny whale and ice birds, like gnats upon the troubled waters; sea-gulls innumerable, homelike as though they too were exiles from the northern shores; Cape devils, gannets, Cape pigeons—butterflies of the ocean—with lovely black-and-white barred wings, and many others with unwearying pinion, follow us night and day, and, rocking with the rolling breakers like winged waves, they look so serene and heedless, that we long, when the weight of our captivity is pressing most heavily, to share their limitless freedom.

The passengers have actually summoned up courage to organize athletic sports, which are rather amusing, partly on their own account, but principally from the very absurd positions of the competitors, who are thrown here and there by the lurching of the vessel.

The sack and obstacle races are very droll, and a cock-fight, in which a celebrated prize-fighter from the third-class takes part, is quite irresistible. It does not at all resemble the old cruel sport of cockfighting, for in this game two men are seated on the deck, their hands tied fast, and a stick put under the knees and over the arms, effectually imprisoning them, and in this ridiculous posture they sit and edge near together, while endeavouring to find an opportunity to push each other out of a chalk line drawn in a circle round them. When one is knocked off his balance it is an easy matter for his opponent to thrust him out of the line, the victory remaining to the pinioned individual left inside. Skipping competitions, "go as you please," and egg-and-spoon races are run, but all are difficult on a moving ship.

August 25. In the heart of the storm.—Day after day the gale continues, with high seas and wet decks, and, as a natural consequence, there is great difficulty in walking. Ludicrous episodes are often taking place, and one in which my maid played the chief part was very comical. She was bringing my early coffee, and stepping from the quarter-deck over the weather-

board at my cabin door, a great wave splashed over the bulwarks, and took her completely off her feet. Instead of clinging to anything that would have helped her, she stuck resolutely to the cup of coffee, and must have been washed into the scuppers had rescue not been at hand. Another day one of the passengers, who rejoiced in great length of limb, was foolishly exercising it on the upper deck, and was incontinently flung over a skylight on his nose, cutting it so severely that he is obliged to wear strips of sticking-plaster across his face, which gives him a sinister but very droll expression.

September 1. St. Partridge. On deck.

"Ye gentlemen of England, that live at home at ease,
Ah! little do you think upon the dangers of the seas."

Notwithstanding the rough weather, when there is a lucid interval in the gale, concerts are held, and at one of these a young fellow volunteered to read the "Prisoner of Chillon," not an enlivening romance at the best of times. The performer is tall and fair, and wears spectacles, and his appearance always reminds me of that of the "Private Secretary," so I knew that when he commenced to read I should begin to laugh. I also perceived the mood throughout the saloon was frivolous, and not appropriate for appreciating so serious a tragedy. The youth read on profoundly

untouched by the ill-suppressed tittering, until a burst of uncontrolled merriment caused him to look up, when we at once became quiet and he began again. Unhappy being! The next line was his last: "O God, it is a fearful thing." This, of course, brought down the house, and the remainder of the prisoner's sad history was for us buried in oblivion. The amiable reciter took the non-success of his reading in very good part, and beamed upon us as cheerfully as though we had applauded him to the echo.

This reminds me of an incident B. once laughingly related about himself. On a former voyage he was induced to perform at a concert held on deck, where the third-class passengers and sailors formed part of the audience, and was singing to his own banjo accompaniment, and imagining that everything was going on well, when suddenly the illusion was cruelly dispelled by a voice from the steerage contingent, which easily reached B. The question asked was laconic enough, and the whisper ill-concealed, but I should like to have seen B., whose sense of humour is so strong, when the gentle desire for information made itself known in the words: "Wot the dickens is that cove trying to do?"

This is the laughable side to an interval of endurance, for how else can a rough voyage be described?

Luckily for human nature, the more sombre details

of an experience can be forgotten when it has a brighter aspect, however brief it proves. It is agreeable when people are involuntarily humorous, for it prevents serious thoughts, which sometimes have a trick of suggesting themselves unbidden at inopportune moments.

While this long storm lasts my imagination is busily employed in conjuring up all the horrors that lurk in the depths of the ocean, and I often wonder, if anything unforeseen happened, how far down we should go, for the waves look exceedingly hungry, and tear after us like beasts of prey. In the darkness I long for the nerves of steel some seem to possess, that my fears might be laid at rest. It is when night falls that the prescience of evil proves me a coward.

In the daylight life is full of keenest pleasure, and my great delight is to sit for hours right aft behind the wheelbox, watching the endless track we make upon the tumbling waste. How the curling breakers lift themselves and threaten their cruel menace, and are foiled by the backward sweep that ever stays their seeming lawlessness, and curbs the deadly carnest of the fury that would else devour!

## . . . . . .

The days speed on. The reckless storm-wind has settled to a calm, the fierceness of the tempest becomes a memory, and as we near land once more

it is over a blue and tranquil sea, under a soft and tender sky.

September 3. Leaving Tasmania.—To see a new country appears to me always like the fulfilment of a From early morning yesterday we were dream. skirting the south coast of Tasmania, with its wooded shores and rocky islands, a strange, wild picture in somewhat monotonous colouring, due to the prevalence of "blue gums" (eucalyptus trees). night as we steam up the Derwent River, and drop anchor at Hobart, where, in the glow of moonlight which bathes everything in mystery, the scenery is most impressive, with the wide river, placid and smooth as a mirror, in which the many lights of the town are repeated, while away beyond the abodes of men, the sombre forests, with the giant form of Mount Wellington, loom darkly in the distance.

There is evidence of much joy in the reunion of long-parted friends on the evening of our arrival at Hobart. Here numbers of the passengers are to leave the ship for Melbourne and other Australian ports. One of these, on meeting his relatives, goes into raptures over the interesting events of his travels, ending with the statement which he had evidently kept as the climax of his description: "Paris! Oh, Mother, Paris on Sunday is just like Melbourne

on Saturday night!" No more eulogistic appreciation of his festive time in the gay continental city could have been pronounced by this most utterly Victorian youth.

We did not go ashore until early morning, when we were invited to have breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Atkins. Our time was short, the coaling being done during the night.

Six o'clock saw us ready for the tender which conveyed us to shore. How queer and temporary the wooden houses looked to me! But they will grow more familiar in time, as I believe the Hobart buildings are typical of those in most Australasian towns. There appears to be plenty of sunshine, and an almost perfect climate, to compensate for the absence of bricks and mortar and the warmth they supply. Sunlight and a wealth of flowers—what more could be desired in winter months? Yet even on these balmy, southern shores, the sight of a glorious log-fire in our friend's dining-room seemed good to our Northern eyes, and appetites, weary of unstationary meals, did ample justice to a delicious breakfast.

Our kind host, who had just arrived with us from England, arranged that we should have a delightful drive round the town, and to the Botanical Gardens, which are exquisitely situated with wide views over river and mountain, and where flourish endless varieties of rare plants and shrubs from all parts of the world, many exotics from tropic shores, and, to my bewilderment, flowers of every clime and season, all blooming together in the most unseasonable manner possible.

I saw daffodils, roses, marigolds, snowdrops, hyacinths, mignonette, passion-flowers, and chrysanthemums side by side, showing a reckless disregard of congruity that surely was unparalleled, Flora herself, in an antipodean freak, conspiring to turn the habits of the seasons topsy-turvy. The sight of such loveliness was sweet and familiar; but there was something strange in it all. I felt aggrieved that this seeming anachronism should assert itself in such gay profusion, for wistfully I remembered that daffodils and marigolds never kept tryst in my country; and why should they appear so audaciously together here?

After the endurance of the last sixteen days, we certainly thought we deserved more time on shore, and our friends were most anxious to have taken us to the celebrated Fern Tree bower; but we had regretfully to say adieu, and to return to the ship, with our desires to lionize further ungratified.

As we drop down the Derwent, its surroundings

remind me greatly of Scotland; there is the same calm restfulness that is in much of the loch scenery. At the mouth of the river, on a small island, is a lighthouse, in former days known as the "Iron Pot," now the Derwent Light. Beyond this, Cape Raoul, a curious volcanic outcrop, fringes the coast, standing straight and bold as though hewn into organ-pipes, and consisting of a group of wild-looking rocks of basaltic formation.

Our course is now shaped east by north, and peak after peak of the outlying mountain-range is coming into view, bathed in the golden sheen of the setting sun, the sky unspeakably beautiful, as these southern skies are wont to be, vivid and wonderful. Even when clouds are grey and overcast, they have not the dull, leaden hue of an English winter day, but are shot with all the colouring of the prism, and softened like the plumage of a dove. As we look our last upon Tasmania, the sun sinks behind the islands, a red ball of fire, leaving them silhouetted clearly in the gathering twilight.

And now that we have nothing between us and New Zealand, the goal and aim of our voyage, our thoughts are naturally turning to the prospect of this new period of our lives. B. knows something of the Colony, having already spent a few weeks there. This time his stay is to be while the New

Zealand Midland Railway, which he has undertaken to construct, is in process of formation. I am consequently somewhat less ignorant about it than many good, old-fashioned folk at home, who are doubtful even as to its geographical position, and imagine that it is situated in Central Australia, while others think it necessary to add "Near Tasmania" to its postal address.

And yet all previous knowledge, gained from hearsay, is soon forgotten in the greater opportunities of personal experience. It will be droll if we have come thirteen thousand miles to lead an entirely English life again. I wonder if social festivities will be the same, and will there be small afternoon dissipations, where time is so often wasted, and after which the conversations have to be repented; where the amateur reigns supreme, and the pleasure is sometimes mixed with pain?

However it may be, we who are waiting on the threshold of life in a country new to us, are reluctant to cross it, for the realities may be less fair than the ideals our imaginings have pictured.

The possibilities of an unknown future make me regret that the voyage is so nearly over, for the days have passed so pleasantly, despite wind and weather, that it will be long ere we forget the kindness we have received from one and all alike on board the *Rimutaka*. How I shall yearn for this vast expanse of sea and sky, when the trammels and limits of the land, and the trivialities of ordinary intercourse are chafing my spirit, and my trivialities, alas! perchance chafing the spirits of others!

### CHAPTER III.

### "IN THE SWEET OF THE YEAR."

- "O unestrangëd birds and bees!
  - O face of nature always true!
  - O never-unsympathizing trees!
  - O never-rejecting roof of blue!

Once more I am admitted peer
In the upper house of nature here,
And feel through all my pulses run
The royal blood of wind and sun."

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

# September 8. Wellington.—New Zealand at last!

Very early this morning we began to sight land, though hazily through mist and rain, and, after a few hours, anchored in Wellington harbour, where we had ample time to study our surroundings before we were allowed to leave the ship. There was much delay caused by the Health and Customs officers, who put the vessel through a very stiff examination, after which we were free.

The situation of Wellington is unique, and entirely

picturesque. The harbour, in a basin, is seemingly encircled by hill ranges, for the narrow entrance through the heads leading to the sea is not visible from the town. On the north side lies the Hutt valley, where there is a Maori Pah (village). Wellington has spread itself over the hillsides, and is gradually creeping round the harbour. The houses are of wood, which I suppose may go without saying now that we are in the Colony, and the Government offices of the Capital are the largest wooden buildings in the Southern Hemisphere.

When we drew up alongside the wharf, my first view of the mingled crowd assembled there almost inspired me with the wish to write a dissertation on "Hats." It was a Sunday crowd, chiefly composed of men whose head-gear was typical and curious, the prevailing style being a kind of soft, flabby felt covering, kneaded into every variety of shapelessness. In this sight there was to me the sensation of a distinct novelty, and I hope that other things here will lend themselves as readily to my love of humour, as did this display of the country's fashions on Wellington wharf. Time softens most impressions, perhaps ere long even these "rag" hats may appear to me civilized, and de rigueur!

We have spent our last night on the dear old ship, and to-day Mrs. Maxwell, a friend in Wellington

with whom we had luncheon, took us for a charming drive round the harbour to the Hutt, where we made acqueintance with the Maoris, and were greatly disappointed to find they were clothed in the garments of civilization. One of the usual characteristics of conquering races appears to be an endeavour to crush every atom of individuality out of the peoples they have vanquished. The reason for this is impossible to discover, for, alas! how rare is originality! It is to be deplored that we do not exert our influence to prevent the savage from copying our dress, which is often as hideous as it is uncomfortable.

One of the native customs I am pleased to see is still unchanged, that is the form of salute. The men and women alike put their heads together until their noses meet, which they deliberately rub one against the other for a few moments, and then as calmly withdraw.

I have no opinion to offer on the desirability of such a greeting; I only say that, as the habit of the country, it is more interesting to a stranger than would be the "common or garden kiss."

Riccarton, near Christchurch, September. "And gleams of sweet content illume my way." — After

bidding farewell to the *Rimutaka* and Wellington, we transhipped to the *Manapouri*, a steamer belonging to the Union Company of New Zealand, which has a large fleet plying round the coast and to Australia, an excellent service of strong and wellbuilt vessels. If ours was an example of the passages they usually make, they would need to be sound and seaworthy. Through the livelong night, sighs, groans, and sounds of misery issued from all the cabins, and only ended when anchor was dropped at Lyttelton.

There seems a certain resemblance between the New Zealand ports; Lyttelton, like Wellington, is reached after steaming through the heads into the harbour, which opens out and stretches for miles, surrounded by hills of considerable height. Inside the breakwater is the haven proper, where vessels of five to six thousand tons can be moored. The town is perched on the hillside, and overlooks the port and shipping. Through a tunnel, pierced in this hill, we came by train out to Christchurch, on the Canterbury plains.

As I wrote the last words a deep sigh of satisfaction escaped me. Whatever be our lot upon this far-reaching expanse, Nature, at least, will not fail. The utter peacefulness of so wide a landscape must rest the weariest mind. A great, outstretched space,

like the unbounded sea, gives free scope to an unfettered fancy. How thankful I am for this! My old horror of a shut-in and pent-up environment will not vex me here, where the limit, forty miles away, is a chain of snow-clad mountain peaks, a mighty range of transcendent beauty and grandeur. This land which rises twelve hundred feet to the foothills, not many years ago was a vast swamp, bare of any vegetation save flax and native grasses; but now acres and acres of grain are growing upon it, and belts of forest trees have been planted over the whole area.

Christchurch, the city of the plains, on three sides is bounded by wide roads, called respectively East, West, and North Belt, and on the fourth by a large park; it appears to have been planned with mathematical precision, every section like its fellow, each street straight as an arrow, with one exception. The main thoroughfare, misnamed "High" (how can a street in a perfectly flat place be thus truly designated?), bisects the town in a slanting direction, and effectually spoils the chessboard pattern.

There are some good buildings here and there, a few situated on the banks of the Avon, which flows picturesquely through the city, overhung with weeping willows, that, judging by the length of their

branches, certainly show a most profound depth of melancholy. Other points of interest in the town will no doubt dawn on me later; meanwhile we are possessed with a desire to discover a house which will hold our numerous and ponderous cases, the small abode where we find ourselves at present being too tiny to accommodate us comfortably. Our larger belongings it absolutely refuses to admit, so we are living apart from most of our goods and chattels, which repose peacefully in the Though the house is so inadequate, the stables. grounds are in the ridiculous ratio that seems to prevail in this country, and extend over eighteen acres.

For the memory I shall always keep of the flowers in this garden, I forgive its pretensions. It was here my eyes were gladdened and my senses stirred by wattles \* in full bloom, the first I had ever seen, and it is not too much to say that, on a day of royal sunshine, to stand beneath these trees, and to look up through their golden-tasselled branches to the blue beyond, is a sight to make one thank God and go on the way uplifted.

Out in the lanes there is another glory: ramparts of golden gorse sweep round field and paddock.

Such gorse! Can it be that this regal pomp of

\* Mimosa.

colour comes from the same wayward bush that grows in the home hedgerows, with here and there a yellow tuft upon its prickly stems? This gorgeous display is a glittering mass at both sides of the road, every separate bloom a flower, while the whole air is redolent with its perfume. With these surroundings, our distant views of snowy mountain peaks are transformed into pictures in frames of imprisoned sunshine.

October. Under the wattle boughs.—Impressions have been crowding in upon me almost too quickly to recount. The charm of discovery is very potent, and because everything here is novel and different, that charm is daily ours. A new flower, an unexpected scene, a fresh way of doing things, or some unconventionality, appeals to us delightfully and surprisingly, and our time is quite full of such experiences.

I grieve to say they are not all pleasant, for even in the sweet days of spring Dame Nature can trip up here, and in her sometimes-tantalizing way give us a quick reminder that she too has her rough moods. My latest trial happened in this wise. Last Sunday I went to church with, I hope, a becomingly Christian spirit, and joined in a service that it took all my fortitude to apply when I returned, and found that in my absence the terror of

the plains had made his entrance, evidently by way of the drawing-room chimney, and, after paying his visit, had departed, leaving a thick layer of soot over the whole room. Being interpreted, this "terror" is no other than a raging, tearing, hot wind, which, laden with moisture from the ocean, comes in contact with the snow mountains, where it drops this moisture in the form of rain on the west side of the ranges, and then, as a dry wind, passes over to the plains, and in this condition roars over the forty miles of space, gathering force and heat as it travels, until, arriving in Christchurch, it pants along the flat, straight streets, raising and sweeping before it clouds of dust.

To me it certainly seems that a climate to which so uncanny a state of the atmosphere is possible, leaves much to be desired. Both the islands are visited by these winds, and it is an old saying that a Wellington man can be recognized all the world over by his instinctive habit of putting up his hands to hold his hat on when rounding street-corners, however calm and still the day may be.

I have noticed that the weather here is just as full of vagaries as in the rest of the world. For my consolation I am told that a hot night in Christchurch is almost unknown. If that be so, perhaps we can tolerate the nor'-westers during the day.

In the North Island the residents are not so fortunate, as is proved by a story I heard lately about the two little nieces of a friend.

The scene, a bedroom in Wellington, on a breathless summer night, where these small children are lying in separate cots; one of them a sensitive atom of humanity with a nervous temperament; the other robust and stolid, supremely invulnerable to hot air, mosquitoes, and insomnia. After various tossings, tumblings, sighs, and moans, a pathetic voice comes from the cot where Erica, the creature of nerves, is vainly trying to fall upon sleep:

"Oh, I wis' there was no 'skeeters; I wis' there was no wind. Why did Gawd make 'skeeters and send wind?"

A sleepy murmur is heard through the stillness from the corner where the stronger-minded baby lies:

"Go to sleep, Ewica; go to sleep. Ne'er mind 'skeeters,—ne'er mind—'bout wind,—ne'er—mind—'bout——Gaw—d."

We thought a picnic would break the monotony of the social formalities which are taking up much of our time at present, and as B. proposed to fish, we arranged to go with him, little dreaming that a day's

pleasuring in Maoriland, which included a railway journey of twenty-five miles, was an enterprise not to be undertaken lightly, and that our first experience of what is at home called a parliamentary train would prove so discouraging. However, we started, and walked to the little "flag station" of Middleton, in picnic spirits, which are always supposed to be cheerful, and arrived at a small, wooden box beside a level crossing, but no ticket office, nor porter, was in sight. The trains, of which there are about two daily, do not stop here unless some one is waiting for them, and the guard in charge takes the fare. There is no fear of being left upon the platform, as the speed does not exceed twelve miles an hour, while the engine draws up on the slightest provocation. It is even said that the guard has been known to stop the train to give change to a pedestrian! Be that as it may, words cannot describe the tedious length of these journeys. B. is so "complete" an angler that he considers no distance too great to travel in quest of a trout stream, but I, who am not so keen, think that it will be better for him while here sometimes to follow the gentle craft alone.

October 27. Compton, Opawa.—At last we have found a house that will be to us more like home, and

have almost established ourselves here. The large gardens and tennis-courts remind me of England, except that I see so many unfamiliar growths—blue gums, wattles, cabbage trees, and a reckless profusion of bloom that the incorrigible, old, British climate rarely permits.

It is almost impossible to estimate the influence . flowers have to cheer the exile, and brighten the lot in a strange land, and were it not for their grace and beauty, what a barren, commonplace desert the world would be! I think I am more grateful than for all other ameliorations, that we are not in a flower-less country.

To-day the veranda is a picture, for across its wide expanse trailing masses of wistaria are hanging, heavy with purple blossoms which scent all the air with their soft, sweet perfume. Here the bees revel and hum, flying to and from the nest they have made close to one of the windows of my room. I deem this a lucky augury, and will leave them there in peace.

The innumerable big, brown, humblebees are called here the "latest colonists," and were imported to propagate clover, which they do most successfully, but they have increased so rapidly that they threaten to monopolize the whole island. There is always the danger of this monopoly with the introduction of anything into New Zealand, for what is comparatively uncommon, and absolutely harmless, in Europe, becomes a positive pest where there is little or nothing to stop its productiveness. The most notable case is of course that of the rabbit, which in a few years has multiplied so quickly that it has ruined many landowners, and veritably turned them out of their runs.

November 10. We join the gay throng.—No sooner are we settled in our new home than the one excitement of the year takes place. This is the November race week, when Christchurch is quite en fête, and the whole population devotes itself to amusement and holiday-making.

Horse-racing is decidedly the national sport, for I understand there is no "township," however small, in the country, that has not either a course of its own, or does not turn out to a man when a race is held in the neighbourhood.

The situation of the Christchurch ground at Riccarton is well chosen, lying on high, wooded land about five miles out of the town, and having an uninterrupted view of the Southern Alps. On a bright day it makes a pretty scene, for the ladies all don their "frills and furbelows" and appear in great force,

seeming to appreciate the sport as keenly as do the men.

Regarding all the technicalities of racing I am a tyro; the lights upon the distant mountain-tops, the ever-shifting panorama of cloudland, and perhaps the music—for I dearly love a brass band—all interest me infinitely more than the events on the card. The "totalizator" provides for many the excitement that may sometimes be lacking in the race; but the dividends dispensed therefrom never seem to be adequate to the irrepressible flutter of expectation that follows the pace of the flying steeds. I wonder if the refrain "bad luck" (not "bad judgment"!) is any consolation to the losers, because it is always the excuse they offer their wounded feelings for failure and defeat.

After all, I feel like Miss Kilmansegg when her rout was ended, for to me the chiefest pleasure of a race day is "the pleasure of having it over;" and the drive home through the strange and motley throng of vehicles, what fun it is! Many, no doubt, are the heavy hearts and lightened purses that the vehicles bear along, but most of the occupants endeavour to be gay, possibly hoping to retrieve their fallen fortunes on another field. Amongst the smarter carriages, the unpretentious cart winds its rather shaky way; but, as a rule, contains a jovial company, who began

their day with the intention of enjoying it, and have not been disappointed. And then gallops past the "larrikin," a notable feature of the homeward route, evidently trying to emulate some favourite winners, for he urges his patient old nag to the top of its bent, and they tear along looking the happiest and most unkempt pair of objects on the road. Maoris, both men and women, form part of the crowd, for they too are enthusiastic followers of the national sport, which occupies three days of the carnival week.

There has also been an Agricultural Show, where the chief interest centred again round the horses and the rather tragic and decidedly unpleasant pastime of wire-fence-jumping. We have visited a Flower Show, where the poor decapitated roses looked just as depressed after the first few hours, as at like functions of the same unhappy nature everywhere else.

All these amusements would seem to be more than enough dissipation in "nor'-west weather," and yet there were also garden-parties and dances and a ball given in the Provincial Chamber. As it was a public assemblage, and this is my own private journal, I may permit myself to say that there were pretty rooms, good music, lovely plants and flowers, and—far too many people!

### CHAPTER IV.

### SUNNY PLAINS AND PLEASANT FOOTHILLS.

"Because where'er there's singing of bird on hill or plain,
We catch each other's meaning, and join in one refrain.

Because the earth is fairer, because the roses blow,
With a loveliness and purity that few men care to know.

And oh, because to all the joys of birds and beasts and flies,
There's something in this heart of mine, there's something that replies.

Because the shades of former days go with me on my way,
And because to-morrow's sunshine is on my path to-day."

New Year's Day, 1890.—A new year in a land that is still strange to me! And how can it be otherwise, when the different conditions of climate here are always asserting themselves?

MAARTEN MAARTENS.

The almanac says Christmas has come and gone, so I must try to believe it. Bret Harte's little Johnny asked, "Wot's Crismus any way?" and the old man answered, "Oh, it's a day." I think it would have

been more bearable to us had we looked upon it only as "a day," and let it go by unheeded.

Fruit on the trees, dust on the roads, heat and flowers, a green Christmas suggesting the old home-adage about a "full churchyard," and everything else that should not have been at such a time; while over there, across the world, were there not bright faces and cheery fires, snow outside, warm hearts within, Santa Claus heavy-laden with bounteous gifts for the children, and with the spoken words many an unspoken prayer for those whom only seas divide?

There was one bit of humour in the dreary day which helped to keep the pathos down; it originated with the blazing pudding at dinner, for we all gazed at it speechless, and then, between despair and heat, simultaneously burst into a fit of laughter. How could we touch it? A pudding and two words in the almanac were our only indications of the festive time. The postman, however, laboured under no such misapprehension, for he sent in a small card upon which was printed:

"With all good wishes for the season, and your postman's compliments."

I must not forget to record the joy and glory of this midsummer Christmas, lest some one, to whom this country is as my own home to me, might enter in a cloak of invisibility, and, looking over my shoulder, whisper ruefully: "Is there no balm in Gilead?"

Roses, roses everywhere; the bliss of them, the utter satisfaction! I want new words to tell it, because their clusters inspire a feeling of beatitude almost impossible to describe. They are grateful to every sense. Yes, even to hear them as I sometimes fancy I do, nodding to each other in a breeze, is delightful. It is plain to see they are happy here, for their blooming is well-nigh exhaustless, and so perfect are they, without spot or blemish, that they must be healthy, and that is a good excuse for happiness, did it need one:

"Masses of yellow and cream and crimson, Deepest golden and faintest pink."

But since everything has been said about roses by everybody who can say anything, I will e'en put my face amongst them and only enjoy.

I find myself somewhat like Paganini these days, alas! only from the fact of playing on one string, and when I cast about for

"Glimpses that would make me less forlorn,"

my thoughts turn to the flowers, and go roving there till it takes all my strength of will to bring them back to people and circumstances; for I really have no time for self-indulgence, strict duty at present being the order of the day. Conventionalities are as much respected here as everywhere else. Most of the old, happy-go-lucky customs one reads of have disappeared from the colonies, the formalities of English social life having taken their place; but I am told all things were very different in the early days and for some time after the arrival of the first four ships at Canterbury. By the way, what Leviathans those same four ships must have been! Great Easterns, to say the least, for it is rare to meet any resident who does not claim kinship with the pioneers who sailed here in them.

There is much to interest in the study of character and habits of a community such as this, but I want to go further and get deeper before I write of the way I am affected by the new society around me. No amount of the mere froth and bubble of intercourse, which is called visiting, brings people really together; that must be done by mutual tastes, and a sympathetic joy in their participation.

I think I have been looking on the black side of things to-day, being rather cross, but not wholly without cause. This morning we went to Lyttelton to see the regatta, rather an important function in the little place. By the time we arrived rain was coming down in torrents, and, after an ineffectual start or two, the races were postponed to a more propitious day. After having luncheon on one of the vessels in the harbour.

we returned home sadder if not wiser, and now we are toasting our toes at a glorious fire quite as readily as though it were an English New Year's Day, and not midsummer, and, as is usual after a futile attempt at pleasure-seeking, have come to the conclusion that "there's no place like home."

January 20. At my window.—I often wish I could sketch quickly and well, in order to fix my memory of the picturesque and sometimes droll figures I see in my drives. Amongst the former the mounted police are conspicuous, with their smart-looking uniforms of dark blue and white. And there are others besides these guardians of the peace whose good riding is a feature here. Every one rides, even your postman: and what a fool he would be to walk when he can buy a pretty good horse for four or five pounds! There is one exception, however, to this rule. This is John Chinaman, as vendor of vegetables. I hardly think he could be guilty of anything so frivolously extravagant, even though he got the horse for nothing; it would have to be fed, and this would not suit his ideas of economy. He carries on his avocation in so characteristic a fashion that it must have a word to itself.

Across his shoulders is a bar of wood, to which are attached huge baskets strung on ropes, piled high with vegetables, and the Celestial goes waddling along under a weight that would make a London costermonger's donkey turn round and expostulate. The "heathen Chinee" is not a dignified figure, but he is hardworking to the point of slavery. He lives sparely, and cannot thus fail to accumulate a little hoard, which he takes home to spend in his beloved land; and for this reason he is not a desirable colonist. Immigration of Chinese to New Zealand is limited by the heavy poll-tax imposed, also because Mrs. Johnny is on no account allowed to accompany her spouse.

B. has been at the West Coast, deciding a new deviation on the Midland Railway, and sent me glowing accounts of his time there, which make me long to see it all and go through like adventures, though he appears to think that much of the toil and difficulty would be beyond my powers of endurance. I will insert two pages from his last letter as part of the record of our doings:—

"We started on Saturday morning for the track through the Bush to Lake Brunner. You must not mistake the word 'track' to mean a road, for we had to scramble and crawl, creep and jump, for seven miles. This, as you may guess, was hard work, for it took us six hours to do the distance, going as fast as we could. Notwithstanding the toil, it was a lovely walk-dense undergrowth, creepers, wild vines, and monster ferns amidst giant trees, while every now and then we came in sight of the beautiful Arnold River two hundred feet below, a perfect trout stream, glittering in the strong sunshine, or darkening in great, still pools, under a canopy of overhanging foliage. At one point we had a taste of Alpine dangers, having to go round a cliff on a ledge of rock not twelve inches wide, which could only be done face to the walls. Next day we had arranged for boats to be at the mouth of the Crooked River to take us up this portion of my proposed deviation. On arrival we found Molloy and his two sons waiting with two very small, flat-bottomed boats, for the river was shallow in places, and full of falls and rapids. One boat carried most of our things, tent, food, and other necessaries. We struggled again through trackless Bush, probably passing over ground which neither white nor black man had ever trodden, the boats being hauled over the rapids by the men. We were seven hours in going five miles, and by this time it became dark; so, selecting a good place, we camped for the night, lighting large fires of dry driftwood, and cutting fern, which made capital couches. One advantage of this country is that you can sleep

always feeling safe from animal life. After seeing what I wanted next morning, we started down stream, six in one small boat. We shot the rapids at the rate of forty miles an hour, over shallows, and into fifty obstructions in as many minutes; it was the best bit of fun I have had for a long time, though there was a certain sense of relief when we got through safely."

B. also sent me several messages, which they call here "delayed telegrams," because delivered by the postman with the letters instead of by special messenger, which would be costly. It is a great convenience to have these messages, as it takes two days for the usual mails to reach Christchurch from the West Coast.

Now that he has come back, we want to have some little excursions to see what lies on the other side of these bare Port Hills behind us. I call them bare, but I like them well; they remind me so often of others far away in my "ain countree," and one of the chief attractions in our choice of this place was the view from my windows of a craggy point that is high enough to lose itself at times in mist and cloud. From here, too, I see the ever-changing pageant of these wondrous skies at dawn and sunset—skies that, even in this temperate zone, are full of fire and colour, and rich with an almost tropic glow and brilliancy. Against the deep blue density of the nor'-west,

evening clouds, the rocky peaks stand out darkly, and sometimes in their gloomy grandeur seem to assume the proportions of lofty and inaccessible mountains.

January 24. Over the hills.—The other day we rode far, bent on discovering what lay beyond the hill summits. Our horses are all good climbers. Mine is long-limbed, with a big stride, and an odd habit of shooting forward when she begins to canter, from which I have named her Petronelle. B's horse is called Ranger, and that of Gwlad, Leo. Their best efforts were not required in the hill-mounting, but a kind of ambling gait that somehow got us along. When the Convalescent Home is passed, the winding road is little better than a track. This house is a fine building, and was presented to the town some years ago. Being on a high elevation, it commands a wide view of Christchurch and the plains, and here invalids of every station of life resort to recuperate, and find the change as beneficial as though they had gone further to seek it.

All sorts and conditions of people wend their way to the Home, often very curious specimens. Amongst these might be classed an old Scotch woman I heard of, who, being in bad health, had been sent there by some charitable person.

In her case a bath was deemed to be the first stage

towards improvement, to which means the poor woman most strenuously objected, but finally submitted, grudgingly asserting that she "hadna been in watter for forty year." However, she survived the obnoxious remedy; but it was, unfortunately, again prescribed the following week. This time she passionately denounced it as beyond a joke, and begged the matron to let her have a "Turkey bath" instead. When asked her reason for wishing to have a Turkish bath, she answered: "Weel, mem, it's just beca'se they're tellin me there wunna be ony watter in tilt"!

As we mount the hills over rough stones and dry water-courses, we find them dreary in the extreme, covered with English grass, amongst which the native tussock crops up in patches. When this is green the sheep are very fond of its young shoots. Here and there in sheltered nooks we see great clumps of Toitoi, which is much more beautiful than Pampas grass, while somewhat similar in the soft grace and droop of its feathery heads. Scarcely a tree is left, though once, doubtless, when the English landed, from the plains to the bays, the ranges were covered with woods.

Now and again we passed a huge bush of sweetbriar in full bloom. It seems that this plant gives as much trouble to the run-holders as the famous thistle, for it quickly spreads, and is very difficult to eradicate. As the purveyors of mutton have no desire to cater for the picturesque tastes of the community, but are simply utilitarian, woe betide the fair flowers that blossom to relieve the barren monotony of these bleak hillsides, for nothing must have room to live that does not minister to the wants of the woolly tribe.

We were amply repaid for our somewhat wearisome ride to the summit of the pass by the view that suddenly broke upon us. Far beneath lay a stretch of blue, untroubled sea, and beyond, ranges of hills bathed in a lurid light from the setting sun.

Turning our faces towards home again, the whole wide landscape of the Canterbury plains reaching the dim distance, with the snow-crowned, Southern Alps for background, lay before us; and, far down at our feet, Christchurch with its tall cathedral spire, and long, straight streets, like a level board on which a child might have laid out the pieces of his game with a box of bricks.

What a loss it is to us that we cannot live always on the heights physically as well as mentally! From them the works of man sink into the insignificance they merit. On the plains of life familiarity and use so hedge us round that we miss the true secret of greatness, but—

<sup>&</sup>quot;On and up where Nature's heart Beats strong amid the hills,"

the order of the mind is restored, doubts are laid at rest, and the fault is our own if there we do not realize that merely to live is joy enough.

And to-morrow we are going in the Rimutaka to Napier, a break that will come in an opportune moment, for we are somewhat weary of the plains, and it seems to me that the prophetic admonition of the fin-de-siècle art critic must have been inspired by a case like unto ours, for by whom could it have been fulfilled more literally?—"Be virtuous, and you'll be happy—but you won't have a good time."

## CHAPTER V.

"AS WHEN OUR LIFE SOME VANISHED DREAM FULFILS."

"Through forest ways
With rustling leaves o'erspread."

"Thou hast no sorrow in thy song, No winter in thy year."

February 8. Compton.—It is long since I have written anything here, but meanwhile Nature has been opening for me the portals of her "Hall of spells," and discovering some of the wonders of her exhaustless treasury, so that whether I describe them, or only keep them in my heart, it matters not at all; some memories never fade, but stand out more clearly for the mists and dimness that surround them.

At last the bewildering enchantment of primeval forest has entered my spirit, and my first glimpse of the Bush seems to be an era from which to date all after-events. I have felt Nature's glamour deep and strong, which, like the "passion poesy," is a divine

essence; lacking this vital aliment, the spirit may pine in a world that is full of beauty; but, alas! apprehension (as well as opportunity) is needed to "observingly distil it out."

I have always loved the woods more than any other haunt, and I have ever believed that in them I should find again the companions of my infancy—fairies, brownies, gnomes, and dryads, and all the fantastic elfish beings whose home is beneath their spreading boughs. This faith I have kept inviolate, untouched by my later heresies, so I enter the Sanctuaries of Shade with the credulity of a child, and who dare say that a mind ready to receive every impression will not be more amply rewarded than the sceptic intellect which rejects all but the mere botanical evidences of the forest's wonders?

In this fair land there is a charm which has not been so potent with me in other scenes, or possibly it may strike me more happily in these unpeopled wildernesses—I mean the unutterable solitude, the silence that can be felt.

But I must try to remember that this is a diary, and proceed consecutively with the narration of our doings, not too frequently letting facts give way to fancy, nor allowing sweet, wilful Memory to run away with my pen. I do not understand how it is that some of the residents in New Zealand can be content

to go on year after year with the glories of this most exquisite country at their very door, and yet make no effort to cross the threshold and see what lies beyond.

Now after this long preamble I must describe how I went first to the Bush. Last month the Rimutaka arrived again here, having been round the world since our voyage. While in the Colony the steamers of the two principal lines go from port to port taking in cargo, and this time the Rimutaka's route was arranged to be from Lyttelton to Napier in the North Island, and afterwards to Wellington. We decided to make a coasting trip, and found that having the big vessel practically to ourselves was quite the most delightful form of yachting possible.

We left Lyttelton one evening, and the next arrived outside Napier, where there is no anchorage for ships of any size, so they have to lie in the open roadstead, which, in rough weather, is most unpleasant. Wishing to go ashore, we found we had to do so in rather a barbaric fashion. The sea was so rough that it was useless to put the gangway down to the tender; so, instead, we had to be lowered in a very ignominious way. A large, square piece of sailcloth was spread on the deck and we sat down upon it, when the four corners were gathered together by ropes fastened into a ring, which the crane, kept at work near the hold, hooked, and then swung into mid-air, with no more ceremony than if we had been frozen mutton, its usual freight. There was a feeling of utter insecurity for a breathless moment, when the 'extraordinary thing begun turning round and round like a teetotum; however, at length we reached the tender's deck in safety. Though this means of locomotion was novel, a little of it went a long way; unfortunately the only alternative, a rope ladder, was out of the question. Our discomfort even now was not over, for on the uncanny sea the little tug played pitch-and-toss with us right into the harbour.

The landing-place at Napier is called the Spit; but, as Betsy Trotwood would say, "Why Spit?" Surely the Maori "Ahuriri" is much more euphonic.

Why are we, as a nation, wherever we go, so prone to do away with native terms, and to substitute for them our own unmusical nomenclature? There is nearly always a meaning in the Maori names, and the signification is generally to be found in some characteristic of the place itself. It is otherwise in the old country, where, for instance, a house is called "The Cedars" or "The Pines" from the presence of one sickly, little shrub huddled up in a distant corner of the garden; or more often because neither of the trees could be by any means induced to flourish in the neighbourhood. The force of this curious national

trait has struck me frequently here, especially on one of the railways, where "Johnsonville," "Wallaceville," "Mauriceville," and many more of the same senseless innovations, have doubtless elbowed the original designations into oblivion.

So much for the inartistic tastes of pioneers.

But I must go back to Napier, where I left myself on the wharf, recovering from the effects of too much frozen meat sling. It is a bright little place, with picturesque dwellings perched in every chink and cranny of the rocky hill where foothold is possible, and these have beautiful gardens full of lovely flowers.

The climate is hot and dry, the streets very white, and there is an intense glare, so trying to the eyes that many people are compelled to disfigure themselves by wearing blue spectacles.

One day of our stay, unfortunately in semi-tropical weather, we went by train to Tomoana, to see the works where mutton is prepared for shipment, but were afraid to go into the freezing chamber, the most interesting department in the building, because of the difference in temperature. There were multitudes of unhappy-looking sheep in paddocks, and innumerable skins of the brethren who had preceded them to the bourne from which these poor creatures in New Zealand never return.

It is a mechanical business all through, slaughtering

by thousands, dressing the skins, tinning the tongues, freezing the carcases, and tying them up in their little, white muslin shrouds, to be "tallied" and shipped to England, and there to be eaten under protest; though why this should be I cannot imagine, for surely it is reasonable to suppose that an animal fed naturally upon sweet grass in pure air, should be more wholesome food than when reared on oil-cake and turnips, often in cramped space and under leaden skies.

I wish my longing to see everything had not taken me to Tomoana. I shall never lose the disagreeable recollection of this malodorous place. After three days we were quite ready to leave Napier.

My powers always fail when I try to describe the fascination the ocean has for me. I think it is something like the feeling a serpent-charmer has for the beautiful, dangerous creature that lures and yet repels him. I love and hate it at the same moment; but in daylight the love is supreme, for then the sensations of insecurity and cowardly fear, which possess me in the darkness, are chased away by the pure enjoyment of the hours that only say "Live and rejoice!" Nowhere can freedom of mind, dominating over physical imprisonment, be experienced more effectually than on a ship's deck, where

keen exhilaration and wild delight are ours with every breath we draw of the precious elixir. Even in the most glorious landscape there is ever something that shuts out the wide arch of heaven; here, from horizon to horizon, is no limit nor barricade—

"But over me unrolls on high
The splendid scenery of the sky,
Where through a sapphire sea the sun
Sails like a golden galleon."

Would that these pent-up and prosaic bodies could be transported in as brief a time as thought; then how little of my life should be spent in towns! I find it irksome even to write about my sojourns there; never is it so when I am describing wilderness and ocean.

February 10.—It is quite a pleasure to feel I have still to finish the account of our little tour.

We did not stay long in Wellington, having planned a short journey, which would take two days, through the Manawatu Gorge, going by way of the Rimutaka Incline, and returning by what is called, surely in irony, the "Forty-mile Bush," where are certainly remnants of a forest, though few and far between.

The first morning we started in the train at seven. As swift driving would not pay in New Zealand (the traffic being inconsiderable and the locomotives too light), I find you must begin early if you wish to travel a long distance, time being no object to the officials, for here, as the old Scotsman remarked: "There's plenty, there's plenty eneuch for a'; ye see, the Lord's aye makin' 't!"

I think it was on a line in this country that an old woman who wished to travel from one little town to another, having put her luggage in the van, informed the guard that she intended to go on foot this journey, for she was "in something of a hurry!"

The route over the Rimutaka range is very interesting. There is in use a special engine for the more inclined portion of the road, which has a wheel that grips a centre-line somewhat similar to that used in the Hartz Mountains in Germany, on what is called the "Abt Incline," or, as I overheard an individual here, who was evidently proud of his knowledge, speak of as the "A. B. T. System." I am not at all sure that if I begin to go into technical details I may not make much more egregious errors than did this learned person, so I will content myself by saying that ascending the Rimutaka reminded me of the journey up the Righi, and to me the methods used seemed equally dangerous, an opinion I attribute solely to my own delusion, for I know they are both quite as safe as the usual modes.

There are many gullies between the hills, down which the wind sometimes drives fiercely, and on two occasions trains have been blown right into the valley below.

I had often heard of the work of pioneering, but until now had never realized its capabilities for upheaval; mile after mile along our route we saw lands covered with fallen timber, stumps blackened by fire, and great trunks standing scarred and broken. with no vestige of green upon them; the once noble landscape turned into a feeble imitation of Bret Harte's "Lone Star Mountain," "One Horse Gulch," "Poker Flat," or any other unsightly location that is the offspring of expedience. As we wound about the hills the devastation and desolation became more apparent, for pioneers burn all before them, and wait for years until the scarred timber has rotted sufficiently to make it easy to uproot, labour being usually too costly to employ for clearing. During the years of decay, English grass is sown, and cattle graze amongst the mouldering stumps.

I must not forget the brighter spots that enlivened the pall of gloom lying over the scene. In the midst of the ruin were large tracts of untouched primeval forest, which were almost too beautiful for description, and I know, though I try to describe them here, I shall only prove to myself how far I am from the "vestibule of palaces whose courts we never win."

No mere words can convey the wonder of Nature's lavishness in the wild tangle and green bewilderment of the Bush.

Overhead, towering above their fellows, rise the mighty Tawa \* trees, giants of the wood, and, clinging to their ancient trunks, the creeping Rata† winds, festooning their branches, and throwing her tendrils out on all sides till these are twined together and the whole underbush is darkened with a shadowy mystery, beneath which the stately tree-ferns wave their graceful fronds, and make a cool cover for countless myriads of lesser fern growths that carpet all the earth with flossy, filmy verdure. Verily 'tis an enchanted land! 'tis the land of faëry! And yet, alas! it is doomed, and these most priceless gifts will in time be laid waste for ever.

At last, after dragging along for over ninety miles, we reached Etekahuna, the present terminus of the line, where we had luncheon, or at least we endeavoured to eat, but the fare was so like the repasts I remembered in Spanish ventas that I felt my appetite fast disappearing though unappeased. We then resumed our journey in a wonderful vehicle, called by courtesy a coach, which was simply a.

<sup>\*</sup> Beilschmiedia tawa.

<sup>†</sup> Metrosideros lucida.

thunderstorm on wheels; and in this, as we were not fortunate enough to secure box-seats, we had to drive twenty-eight miles, cooped up with several Maories.

We passed through much the same kind of scenery as in the train, and came at length to Woodville, which is one of the mushroom towns that spring up round a clearing, with a mayor and corporation, townhall, bank, six hotels in one street, and,—strange to say, no debt!

Twelve years ago, the spot where the town now stands was seemingly impenetrable bush. So much for the deeds of pioneers! It must be acknowledged that these men, who, in every sense, are the carvers of their own fortunes, are brave and courageous; but I wish their strong-mindedness could be shown in a less selfish manner, and that the work, which has been perfecting for centuries, was regarded by them more sacredly, and was not so often wantonly destroyed.

# "Joy rises in me like a summer morn."

Next day, having a few hours to spare before the departure of the coach, we spent them in the Bush, where we were wildly excited at all the strange and beautiful things we saw. Not even the fact of continually tripping over unseen logs, and being held back by "supple jacks," could calm our exuberant spirits.

It is often thus in a wood, above all, in an entirely new kind of wood, where everything seems wonderful.

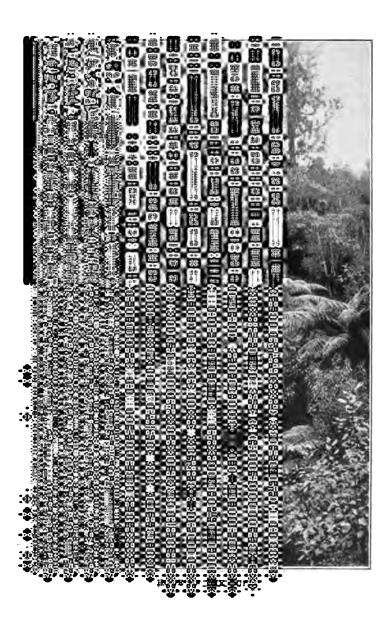
Of one small plot of that charmed ground, which her attendant fays had covered with a mass of maidenhair fern, no lesser light than Queen Titania herself could have been the sovereign!

When, in the branches above, sang the enchanter, it was indeed a "wilderness of harmony." Was it earthly music, or a strain from heaven? Never had deep delight come to me in so full a measure! On earth a green environment of beauty, in air a rapture of thrilling cadences—

Heart of the hill, Dream of the wood, awake; Sing to us still!

At last I was in a haunt where the Tui had his home undisturbed. His notes were like the welcome voice of living waters in a thirsty land; and no carol ever breathed could be more at one with the surroundings.

It was not so much a wakening of the silence by a sound of joy, as an echo of the solitude in melody, the treasured sweetness of the Bush poured forth in song.



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We were loth to leave this wood, but time and coaches wait for no man, and we had before us a drive of seventeen miles through the Manawatu Gorge, which must have been very fine before it was defaced. I have the impression that I heard the origin of the name arose from the exclamation of a Maori chief, who, describing his first view of the deep ravine, cried: "Man a watu!"—"My heart stopped beating!"

In the Gorge, high hills rise on both sides, covered with dense bush, and far down beneath flows the river, while the road is simply cut out of the hill, and is quite narrow, with many twists and curves, only having room at intervals for two vehicles to pass each other. Our coach had much better accommodation than that of the previous day, and soon after entering the Gorge we had reason to congratulate ourselves upon having one of the finest drivers in New Zealand. A practised eye and a skilful hand are necessities on such a dangerous road; for a false step, or a sudden start of the team, would mean short shrift and a headlong descent. Nothing occurred to mar our enjoyment, and the scene was well worth the sensation of peril, though driving such as this, keeps one at too high pressure for absolute pleasure.

Across the river the face of the hill has been scarped and scarred—to make a railway!

The tireless, destroying hand of man again!

Perchance these unsightly banks will green over in time, and the Gorge be left in peace, if only for the sake of the profit that will accrue from tourist traffic. Even so contemptible a motive would be excusable if it would save the Bush.

The remainder of the road to Palmerston North is ordinary enough. We left the coach at the station, which we found crowded with Maoris of both sexes. The men struck me as better-looking than the women, whose faces are somewhat disfigured by tattooing.

One old chief interested me greatly; he was greybearded, and dressed in English garments up to his cap, which was curious, made of the body-feathers of the grey albatross. 'At the side the wings stuck out like those of a sculptured Mercury. I must confess to feeling slight qualms when I looked at him, and recalled the probability that in his younger days the menus of his dinners contained dishes composed of portions of his enemies, and that possibly he might have been in league with Te Rauperau, when that redoubtable warrior made his celebrated raid upon the South Island, and "ate his way through Canterbury." The Maoris seem anxious to forget the dark, Cannibal page of their history, and perhaps it would be kinder to relegate it to oblivion.

The journey back to Wellington, which was partly

along the coast, led us through the same sad sights as those of the previous day—clearings, destruction, desolation. In some places the clearings by burning were going on, and when night came the scene was very impressive, though to me horrible in the extreme. There stood the kings of the forest with fire at their heart's core, flaming beacons for miles around. No power they possessed could withstand the creeping terror that burnt out the life and slaked its cruel thirst with the sap of their rich, green foliage. In the weird, wild light they looked almost human, stretching forth their scorching arms—

"Like Titans of primeval growth
By tortures overcome,
Their brown enormous limbs they twine,
Bedew'd with tears of gum;
Fierce agonies that ought to yell,
But, like the marble, dumb."

What an evil thing is civilization, when it means such utter demolition of the ancient landmarks, and the erection of structures all unworthy to take their place. For, instead of the sublime, God-made grandeur of the woods, man rears his ignoble roof-tree, and under it too often are planted the seeds of avarice, cruelty, and vice, which yield a brave crop; but, alas, for the majesty and unbroken stillness of the primeval forest!

While travelling, we stood on the platform of the

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long carriage, and felt the heat from the burning timber as it blew in great gusts across our faces.

I was amused on this journey to see a young Maori woman come out of the next carriage to ours, sit down huddled in a heap on the step, and quietly draw a pipe from her pocket, which she filled, lighted, and smoked; and then as quietly put back again and returned to her seat, without the slightest fuss, while on her face was an expression of placid and rather stoical enjoyment.

After the Bush, breezy Wellington looked somewhat tame, notwithstanding its smart name of "Empire City," bestowed on it by the newspapers, a designation which appears characteristic of London alone. ever, there is no harm in aspiration, and naturally the Colonies will never discredit themselves by thinking lightly of their possessions. We spent a few pleasant days in the town, saw the Sculling championship of New Zealand won, and amused ourselves in boating and driving, and at length started for Lyttelton in the Takapuna. As the Rimutaka was leaving the same time for England, we followed the big ship out of harbour, and watched her shape her course "Eastward ho!"-where, alas! we could not follow-until the mists of evening hid her from our view.

## CHAPTER VI.

#### IN MOUNTAIN SOLITUDES.

"I want air, and sunshine, and blue sky.

The feeling of the breeze upon my face,

The feeling of the turf beneath my feet,

And no walls but the far-off mountain-tops.

Then I am free, and strong, once more myself."

LONGFELLOW.

Compton. Saint Valentine's Day.—As I looked from my window this morning, and saw sunshine and flowers, heard the blithe birds carolling unseen among the leaves, then suddenly recalled the date, I felt my patron saint had indeed offered me the gifts I most truly valued for a birthday blessing. I had never been so signally honoured in the bygone years.

My festival had been hitherto always passed in countries where stern winter reigns in February, and my memories of it are of ice palaces pictured on the window-panes, my beloved trees heavy laden with their soft, white covering, the separating snow; and wee robins timidly hopping about, with no heart to

sing, a world of "pity and of death," for whose frostbound silence there seemed no glad awakening. Today Nature rejoices with me and gives me her most welcome benediction.

There is another welcome awaiting me when I go downstairs and find the breakfast-table piled with gifts from my dear ones; a largesse of flowers, and—to carry out the feeling I constantly have, that this country is Topsy-Turveydom—a plate of green figs out of the garden. Try as I will, I cannot accustom myself to these strangely named months, for I always have the home calendar in my mind; so that, whatever may be said, I feel this must be July!

The antipodes have the best of it, for in the dismally named months they have their summer, and when winter comes, if it ever does, May, June, July, and August will sound so cheerful that I shall imagine the weather has made the mistake, for I have gathered that real winter is almost unknown here, and am told that the difference in temperature is only for a short time, and never very pronounced.

My expedition to the North Island has made me eager to go afield again.

Ah! how truly do I wish I were not such a restless being, sorely depressed with a stationary life, and feeble-minded enough to be excited with even the anticipation of any kind of vagabondage! Other

people are happy without constant change, and their exemplary behaviour is a sort of reproach to me.

This also is depressing!

However, I am indeed consoled when I think that something like the uncomfortable spirit that possesses me, may have, in a much higher and nobler degree, animated the eager souls of the world's early pioneers, and that they never dreamt of fighting against the nomadic instinct.

B. having long wished to take us over the proposed route of the Midland Railway to Greymouth, on the West Coast, has planned a tour for the end of the month; he, Gwlad, and I are to ride, and Miss Mein to drive in a carriage that will also hold all the necessaries for the journey.

February 28. Castle Hill Accommodation House.— We have come thus far, and though Petronelle and I did not wholly approve of the great amount of climbing we had in our twenty-miles' ride to-day, I must write a brief account now, as well as at the end of each day during our absence from home; first impressions are always most vivid, and if I record our doings as they pass, it will be less effort than trying to recall them when we return.

We left our little station of Opawa very early,

then came on by rail to Springfield at the commencement of the foothills. The horses and carriage we had sent on before with Bailey; and, endeavouring to keep from burdening ourselves with superfluities, have left them at home, as well as my maid, and the luggage is compact enough to do honour to any travelling capabilities.

It is said that a bad beginning is usually a good ending; we hope it may be so, for we started in a misty drizzle most disheartening, but we have the consolation that it is nearly always fine over the hills when raining on the plains, and vice versd. If fate gives us sunshine, so much the better, but we are provided with one thing which can hardly come under the head of impedimenta—that is, the determination to enjoy everything "weather or no."

Bailey was waiting at Springfield with the horses and the buggy, a peculiarly Colonial contrivance, most convenient for going through rivers, though having no pretensions to comfort nor comeliness. However, Miss Mein preferred driving to riding, so we are all satisfied. Gwlad and I donned our habits, and, after luncheon, we all left the Springfield Hotel.

For the first few miles the country was flat and monotonous, then, after several times fording the Kowai River, we shortly began to ascend Porter's Pass, whose summit is 3400 feet above sea-level. The road winds drearily up hills that are covered only with yellow tussocks and spaniar grasses. As we climbed, the mist-wraiths wheeled round, and the air, close and stifling in the valley, on those barren heights became keen and piercing. No sign of life was visible, save a melancholy hawk which eyed us askance, evidently doubting our right to invade his territory.

The summit passed, we soon came down upon Lake Lyndon, a mountain tarn, one of the few available places where Christchurch people can skate, though I should think the long journey would deter even keenest lovers of that sport. At length the mists rolled away, and we had before us a glorious view of mountain and sky; while, for miles ere we reached it, Castle Hill was in sight. This knoll, castle-crowned by nature, is a curious outcrop of limestone rock, its slabs and columns well calculated to deceive, for, at a distance, their singular conformation might easily be mistaken for Druidical remains or the ruins of some ancient fortress. Such an isolated freak is the more striking in a portion of the country almost entirely composed of slate and shingle.

Oh, the keen exhilaration on these mountain tops! Surely we of the plains and heavy skies shall not be judged by the same standards as the dwellers in clearer atmospheres, who have no weight of climate to hold them down. Here—

"The heart is so full that a drop overfills it,
We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green."

But, I forget, the word "leaves" is here a figure of speech, for in all the mountain-guarded plateau whereon Castle Hill is situated, there is but one patch of forest, the dull, sad green of the Towai (black birch).\*

The absence of trees on this high land does not seem to be greatly felt, for we care to think of nothing but the fresh, pure air that is so good to breathe. Even the prospect of discomfort is forgotten in the mere pleasure of being alive. At night, however, we find the rooms, though very small, scrupulously clean.

As we shall have to stay at a different accommodation house each day, and since they are so much alike, I will describe that of Castle Hill—a long, low, one-storied cottage built of stone (which is exceptional), the inside walls panelled with varnished wood. The diminutive rooms have large, open, whitewashed fireplaces, whereon huge logs are burnt, and there is

<sup>\*</sup> Weinmannia racemosa.

a great display of prints on the walls, and ornaments on the mantelshelves; but of bells there are none, though we find a pretty loud "Cooëe!" procures attendance. Across the road lies Castle Hill Station; the house stands amongst the black birch bush, and is reached by a road leading through a "snow gate," which is a Canadian contrivance, and clearly points to the fact that winter makes itself keenly felt on these high levels.

I wonder if, into so lonely a spot, the demon of ennui ever enters, as he is so prone to do in the peopled dreariness of towns? Point of view is everything, for even the most noble and elevating scenes are but hollow pleasures to some poor souls, else why should Robinson Crusoe have preferred to dwell "in the midst of alarms" to reigning in the solitary state which he calls "horrible"? To what disastrous lengths our vaunted civilization must have come when it has made us shrink from being alone!

Verily, lovers of "Solitude's charms" have fallen upon evil days, for now the difficulty is to find a Juan Fernandez.

I see my dears are becoming sleepy, and doubtless tired of hearing me scribble, so I must close my book and go to rest with a happy mind, knowing that there are "fresh fields and pastures new" for to-morrow's delectation.

## Cass Hotel, March 1.

"The fetterless winds, as they gather,
Are evermore crying, 'Where—oh, where?'"

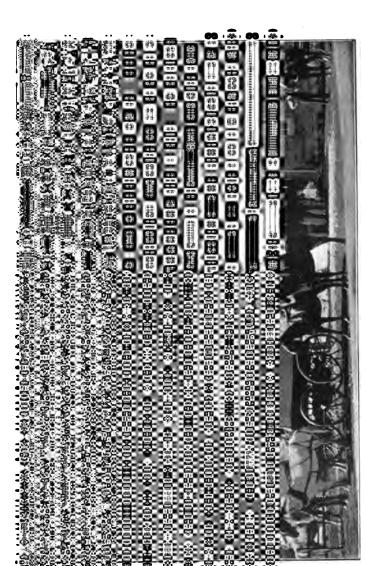
Here we are on a breeze-blown plateau, so far from the haunts of men that the tiny house, where we are located for the night, looks as though it had been dropped down and forgotten.

A curious site for a dwelling-place, this level spot between the mountain ranges, but through the glamour of the wild, pure air the unpicturesqueness is transfigured.

Sometimes it occurs to me that I think too much of air and atmosphere, the environment supposed to be as truly our heritage as life, light, and other earthly blessings, and in the main it is so; but, oh, the difference in the qualities which can stifle and depress, or exhilarate and make us free! No sounder sleeping draught than this mountain breeze was ever quaffed, for so powerful is it, that last night my head had scarcely touched the pillow ere I was far away, in a land of neither dream nor fancy, but in the blessed region of profound, untroubled slumber, from which I came back with new life, and it almost seemed as if the hardness of the couch made my sleep the sweeter.

I find that not only does this air give the quietest rest by night, but by day it braces the nerves to such a tension, that fears of dangers by the way are

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AT CASTLE HILL ACCOMMODATION HOUSE.

unthought of, while giddy heights are scaled, and towering precipices skirted, wholly with unconcern, by no means feigned, but the result of the strength and help that "cometh from the hills." Can we overestimate this priceless gift, the power to ignore and forget our bodily selves, and "go with the winds in their blowing." while "nature and we are peers"?

We began our morning under a brilliant sky, which added not a little to our enjoyment. B. has brought his camera, and proposes taking a number of scenes as we go along, so he commenced to-day by photographing us in a group at the door of Castle Hill. Soon after leaving, we passed the coach for Christchurch, driven by Davis, who is said to be a second Yuba Bill. It was full of passengers; but, fond as I am of coaching, I was thankful we were not "on board." It is far pleasanter to be able to stop when and where we will, and to discover the beauties of the road without being told which way to look and what to admire; also it is sometimes no small boon to be spared the ecstasies of fellow-passengers.

Our ride of fifteen miles was somewhat less barren, for here and there upon the mountains were patches of black birch-bush, and at one point a pretty peep of a deep gully thickly wooded, below which flowed the Highland-looking creek of "Craigieburn." After passing Lake Pearson, we came to the very longest,

straightest road I have ever traversed, leading direct to the Cass Hotel, where we arrived in time for luncheon.

We call the repast luncheon, but I expect it will be dinner. Of course there was mutton served, the law concerning it being as fixed as those of the Medes and Persians; also there was tea offered—with the mutton. This, too, is a custom of the country, but one, I should think, more "honoured in the breach than in the observance," the very idea is so painfully indigestible.

We are feeling lazy, and more inclined to spend the afternoon reposing uneasily on the stiff armchairs, instead of going out to prospect. Through the window we can see the only remains of the Cass River which this long dry summer has left; it was here that, a while ago, B. caught with fly the record trout of New Zealand, weighing ten pounds two ounces.

Of course many much larger have been taken with bait.

Glacier Hotel, Bealey, March 2. By laughing waters.—There is a somewhat Swiss ring about the name of this house, but the place itself is decidedly Hibernian. In deference to the "Sabbath," or maybe because we were too idle, we made only a short stage of nine miles to-day. Soon after leaving the

Cass, we crossed Golding's Saddle, and came down on to the Waimakariri, along the banks of which we rode until we reached Bealey.

The river, or rather the partially-covered shingle bed, in some reaches, nearly two miles wide, still retains its beautiful Maori designation, which signifies "cold river;" and it is well named, for, as its waters flow from a glacier, they are icily chill, and pure as crystal. What a grand sight it must be in flood, with a raging torrent tearing over it, bringing down shingle, boulders, rocks, and trees, everything that tries to cross its path or seeks to stem the impetuous violence of its wild and uncurbed will!

It seems well-nigh impossible that these rippling creeks are ever lashed with the resistless force of a mighty current, whose bounds cannot be set by man, and whose mad freaks laugh limitations to derision; yet so it is, and the management of the mountain streams, with their ever-shifting beds, will always be a perplexing question in New Zealand.

The cutting, along which we rode to-day, is in some places high above the river, where the banks shelve precipitously—more so, indeed, than might be pleasant on a dark winter night, but conveying to us no sense of danger, and the scene was too fine to permit time for disagreeable suggestions. Before us a glorious range of glacier-crowned mountains,

and around a peaceful stillness, broken only by the whirr of cicadæ in the tussocks, and the swish of the water far beneath.

Since luncheon we have been sitting on boulders down close beside the river. We saw no hint of fiercer passions nor of the lawless force of darker days in its tranquil current; there was only a gentle lap, lap against the rocks, an eddying swirl where the pools were deep, a swifter flow over the shallows, and the echo of a song on its beaded ripples. So it glided on to the sea this still afternoon; and as we watched, the sun setting behind the hills, leaving their summits aglow, the moon "like a curled feather" rose from the mountain's brow.

This is the bright side of the picture; there is always a gloomy one, and ours was, being obliged regretfully to come indoors. If we followed George Macdonald's advice, as I should sometimes like to do, we should eschew four walls, and sleep under the stars. I think he must have been staying at the Bealey when he wrote these noble lines: "It's a strange notion some people have, that it's more respectable to sleep under man's roof than God's... What better bed than God's heather! What better canopy than God's high star-studded night, with its airy curtains of dusky darkness!"

As I write, from above the mantelshelf a face looking out of a frame is scowling at me. The portrait is that of an elderly man with a peculiarly ill-favoured expression. From the influence of this picture there is no escape; if you are in the room, you must inevitably be reprimanded by those judicial eyes.

But I discover they do not both look in the same direction; so, after all, he may be frowning at some one else!

Otira Hotel, March 3. A day of days.—I cannot sleep to-night without trying to set down some of the many impressions that have beset me on every side to-day. It has been for me an awakening, a glimpse into a new world; for though, in other years and lands, I have marvelled as greatly at the mystery and grandeur of Nature, the strange fascination of the scenery here affects me in quite another fashion.

I cannot describe its influence; I only know how fresh and strong it is.

When we looked out this morning it was a disappointing world, grey and threatening. Evidently we were not to have all things our own way; but our desire to be content had not failed us so far, and why should it now? and in any case we had

only fifteen miles to go. After the long Waimakariri crossing, we rode through the Bealey Gorge and forded that river repeatedly. On both sides were noble bush-covered mountains, lightened by ribbon-like waterfalls, one of these, a fine cascade, possessing for its name the Devil's Punch-bowl.

It seems to me, judging from the frequency of this designation in so many countries, that his Satanic Majesty is everywhere supposed to have an almost human predilection for that popular beverage!

I wonder if there is anything equal to the bliss of riding through such scenes as these? If so, I have not discovered it.

Higher and higher we went, until we came to a desolate swamp, where were two dismal pieces of water, one of them called Lake Misery—a title that, as Mark Twain says, "fits it like a glove." This dreary region is the summit of Arthur's Pass, three thousand feet above sea-level, and the great watershed is a veritable line of demarcation. On one side barren mountains, rocks, and shingle; on the other, surely the gateway to an earthly paradise, for there the glories of the Otira Gorge lie unrolled before the astonished gaze.

Giant peaks clothed to their crowns among the clouds, with unfading foliage, so dense that not the keenest eye could pierce their thickset ranks, deep-

hued birch, and fiery masses of scarlet Rata; \* while, far below, the Otira River, like a gleaming silver thread, wandered between the huge boulders in its bed, till, curving and twisting, it was at last lost to sight by a bend in the valley. As we wound slowly down the road that turns in zigzags through the close Bush, from every point there was another picture and a fresh surprise; but what avails it to try and describe the beauty of the Otira Gorge, which cannot even be adequately appreciated in one journey?

The point at the bottom of the hill, where the road, being scarped out of rock, practically over-hangs the river, is the spot where Davis, the driver of the coach, on the return journey, always takes an opportunity of trying to lighten the load for his team by an insinuating hint.

Addressing the passengers, he invariably says: "Gentlemen, the Prince of Wales always gets out and walks here."

On one occasion, however, B., who had often heard this speech, tells me he "scored over" Davis. It was a very wet day, and the climb did not look inviting, and just as the horses were about to be pulled up, he anticipated the gentle hint by remarking:

<sup>\*</sup> Metrosideros lucida.

"Davis, the Prince of Wales isn't going to walk to-day!"

At the end of the valley we crossed the river by a bridge. I mention this bridge, as it is an unusual adjunct to the landscape. Far more often have the rivers to be forded, as is the case with the Otira lower down, where, I am told, it is so wild and dangerous that the coaches are sometimes "stuck up" for days, lest in trying to cross they should be washed away.

On reaching the bridge, we came upon a "mob" of sheep being driven from Christchurch to Greymouth, a distance of a hundred and fifty miles, which takes from twenty to twenty-two days. The poor creatures were so completely exhausted when we met them, that they had not strength to get out of our way, but were lying prone on the ground. There is as yet so little land on the West Coast cleared for pasturage, that the demand for sheep and cattle has to be supplied from Canterbury.

This inn, the Otira Hotel, is situated on the banks of the river, quite out of the Gorge, and it seems a comfortable place, although there are the trifling drawbacks of smoky chimneys, hosts of bluebottles, and tribes of children with rampant limbs; but there are compensations, for I have discovered a spring mattress on my bed, in a room where I can turn round.

We may try to imagine ourselves strong-minded enough to discount all such amenities when we are supposed to be "roughing it;" but, alas! the civilized being hankers after material comforts, and fully appreciates any amelioration to his lot when travelling through new countries.

March 4. Lake Brunner. "And all the air a mystery seemed to fill."—Happily, the grey sky of yesterday was only a threat; the weather has been again bright and fair, and the day red-lettered.

We left Otira early, and, after crossing the rough river-bed, entered almost at once into fairyland, for the whole distance of fourteen miles to "Jackson's" is a perfect fernery.

No sooner is the West Coast side of Arthur's Pass reached, than the luxuriance which comes of an almost abnormal rainfall (120 inches) is visible everywhere. Colossal tree-ferns, tiny flossy growths, creepers and mosses in innumerable variety on all sides, make pictures of every rood of the ground; and not only there, but the whole coast-line from Cape Foulwind to the Sounds, is an endless mystery of verdure, a tranquil labyrinth of "untrodden ways."

Since the dim ages of their creation until these latter days, the dense forests have been silently

growing to perfection, standing grave and tall under ripening sunbeams, through cooling showers, beneath the quiet moonlight, or lashed by furious winter winds; but ever upon them has been the loveliness of primeval solitude, broken only by the wild cry of wilder bird. And even now that the forests are echoing with sounds that betoken the approach of man, there are vast tracts of grandeur where his foot has never passed, and solitary places that still bear the impress of the Almighty Hand.

How I wish that the knowledge of evil to come was not ever in my mind! Because of it, the woods to me are always full of unavailing regrets, and with keen delight in their generous beneficence, rises the bitter remembrance that the fiat has gone forth, and this fair land is doomed to be shaped anew according to the vulgar requirements of modern times.

The road which is leading me now into such vain lamentations took us through a very perfect avenue, in a forest where the trees were of many varieties, and not uniform as are those in parts of Switzerland and Tasmania; their names also are as musical as their foliage is beautiful.

Arrived at Jackson's, which I take to be a typical accommodation house, we had luncheon. Our host hailed from Inverness, and had brought from his far-away home the national musical instrument, upon

which he gave us a tune, to our exceeding delight, for we are patriotic enough to enjoy the bagpipes most thoroughly.

After a short rest, we again started for another ten miles; but as we were going along a bridle-track, where the buggy could not follow, we parted from Miss Mein for the night, which she was to spend at Taipo.

I find this ride singularly barren of amusing I have never been so long amidst new incidents. scenes without something happening that has provided cause for merriment. Here people are as solemn as it is possible to be, and all look as though humour were unknown to them, and because of this the accommodation houses are drearier than they need I try to think of the outside world during the short hours that perforce we have to spend in them; but I find myself baffled most effectually each time my eyes are greeted with the daubs and gruesome prints of scenery hung on the walls, for they are in such pitiless contrast to the pictures Nature is everywhere holding up to view beyond these dreary dwellings.

Leaving Jackson's, we struck across the Teremakau, where the river is three quarters of a mile wide, and must be a terror in bad weather, for even in this dry season the water was up to our saddle-girths. On

the opposite side was some soft white sand, in which Leo, to Gwlad's consternation, promptly purposed to lie and roll; being sometimes of an absent turn of mind, I conclude he forgot he was carrying the saddle and his mistress. A bridle-path led us into a large open stretch of park-like land, some miles in length, covered with tussocks, and full of pitfalls, in the shape of small creeks with high banks and swampy patches. This was Bruce's Paddock, and of all the places I have yet seen it appeared to me most remote from human habitations.

All day we had been riding under a burning sky; but in crossing the paddock, to our indescribable relief the sun went down. We had come off the usual road, as B. wished to show us one of his favourite scenes, the country round Lake Brunner ("Kotuku waka oka"—home of the white crane). Before reaching the lake, we rode through a natural avenue of Kahikatea,\* Matai,† and Rimu‡ (white, black, and red pines). These noble trees stood straight and tall, like veterans on guard, while far away, through their long lines, rose majestic, pine-clad mountains.

A beautiful and softly-flowing river with picturesque boulders was in our path, and at length came the crown and climax of our journey, when, through

<sup>\*</sup> Podocarpus dacrydioides. † Podocarpus spicata. † Dacrydium cupressimum.

shadowed openings in our deep bush-track, glimpses of the gleaming lake were seen.

On every side was a

"Waving tide of greenery rippling up the wind," a covering of interlaced boughs and screening shade, a bosky depth of limitless loveliness, a sense of almost primeval solitude and remoteness; and we felt, with all this, a longing that the vision might not pass away and become a memory alone. But, even as we lingered, the light faded from the mountains, and the forest ways in the short, uncertain twilight were darkening fast. The spectral lake lay pale and still, and all the rosy flush was gone.

So in the dusk of evening our beautiful ride came to an end. How beautiful it has been I can never tell, only the remembrance is one more added to my precious store of memory pictures.

To-night we are to sleep in true pioneer fashion, for this cottage is in the midst of a clearing, and the "falled" timber is lying all round, while a very curious fence shuts in the prospective kitchen garden, made of fern-tree trunks placed close together, some of which are sprouting.

We have been down this evening to the lake; it was fair and calm in the tranquil moonlight, and no voice came to mar the utter stillness, until, in the wan, weird shade, the Ruru shuddered past, croaking

his eerie cry: "Moepok! Moepok!" which sounded like an uneasy wraith seeking a resting-place, rather than a comfortable Maori owl.

Marsden, March 5. In which I grumble again.— We have only ridden seventeen miles to-day, as we prefer taking things very quietly, partly to rest the horses, but principally because we are in too idle a mood to make toil of a pleasure.

To-morrow we shall have been a week going over the distance which takes the coach two days. I wonder if the passengers therein are always as well satisfied with their form of enjoyment as I with mine?

There is a type of person called a "globe-trotter," who does not mind how quickly he rushes through a country provided that he can say he has "done it." No matter that at the end of his tour all the localities are inextricably involved in his memory, and rivers, lakes, mountains, and valleys are piled one on the top of the other, in a confusion worse confounded; he is familiar at least with the names of all, for there is no celebrated spot ever mentioned that he has not visited, though, woe to there being no official handbook of New Zealand, he has here frequently to refer to his fellow-tourist to aid him in arranging names and recollections of the places he has seen, which are

generally hopelessly mixed in a chaotic mental jumble.

This kind of thing is surely taking pleasure too seriously, but there is no doubt that to numbers of people it is the acme of bliss, otherwise Mr. Cook would have but a dull time, which, considering the facilities he offers to bond fide lovers of travel, he does not deserve.

We have still the unclouded weather that makes everything a delight. This morning, after crossing the big Ahuna river, we went for some distance through another kind of scene, a part of the country ravaged by the gold craze, and devastated by sluicing, where the riven earth, only partially covered by the healing hand of time, seemed to cry out against its abuse.

Patches of verdure growing on the petered-out claims, and, in some measure, concealing the scars made by man, are Nature's remedies, which, alas! can only be superficial in these exhausted lands.

Near at hand lies the Greenstone township, a village of miserable-looking huts and miners' encampments. In the vicinity is found much of the emerald rock which gives its name to the district, and, indeed, to the South Island itself in the Maori language, in which it is "Te wahi o Pounamu" (the Land of Greenstone). Formerly the rock was much used by the natives to make their weapon of warfare which they called

"mere," but as it is exceedingly hard and difficult to shape, a good one took years to polish to perfection. To the Maori delay is of no moment, for he has an absolute contempt for time which almost amounts to insolence. This heritage he has in a measure handed on to his white conquerors, who are only saved from an equal disregard by being obliged to keep the metaphorical wolf from the door.

A propos of the subject, I heard that a celebrated writer who visited the Colony made the rather scathing remark, that "there was more talk of work here, and less done, than in any other country in the world!"

It was an intense relief to leave the scene of desolation, and to strike again into a beautiful bushtrack as we commenced the long ascent of Marsden Hill. Far and wide thickly-wooded ranges rose on every side of our road, which was over a saddle, in some places only a few yards wide. Amongst the thicket were many of the rare huge black-stemmed "Ponga," a tree-fern of almost prodigious growth, the fronds of which are very strong, and measure three to four feet across.

Settlements became more frequent as we rode onwards, but I was glad to see how very little clearing had been done by fires. One great safeguard for the West Coast Bush lies in the difficulty to make it burn. There is generally so much rain, that the vegetation

is soaked with moisture, and fire takes little hold; and, save in exceptional seasons, the timber has to be felled, an expensive process where labour costs from eight to ten shillings a day, consequently the country has not the unsightly, desolate appearance that the charred and blackened trunks give to the North Island clearings.

At last we arrived here, and found Miss Mein and a most comfortable hotel. Since starting from home we have ridden a hundred miles, and now we propose to rest the horses by staying a week at Greymouth, which we hope to reach to-morrow.

## CHAPTER VII.

## "FOR I AM NOTHING IF NOT CRITICAL."

"I must have liberty
Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please."

SHAKESPEARE.

"Accommodated; that is, when a man is, as they say, accommodated: or, when a man is,—being,—whereby,—he may be thought to be accommodated; which is an excellent thing."—SHAKESPEARE.

Greymouth, March 6. "God made the country, man made the town."—At last we find ourselves at our destination, though our goal is somewhat disappointing. The town looks dull, and we wonder how we shall pass the week, but perhaps interest enough will be found to enliven the time, and although we do not enjoy the delay, we are sure it will be welcome to the horses.

Our ride to-day was only ten miles, and by no means impressive. We met numbers of Chinese who haunt the mining districts to pick up the crumbs from the rich man's table, or, in other words, to wash the tailings from the European's gold claims, whereby is made a meagre livelihood. We amused ourselves by acknowledging their salutations, with "Good morning, Charlie," or Arthur, or any name but John, for which they have a peculiar aversion. They will respond heartily to all other appellations, this evoking only a surly grunt.

The road leads by the sea for five miles, before it reaches Greymouth, through a district once the scene of active mining operations, but now a waste, howling wilderness, though gold is still found on the shore, and is chiefly extracted by dredging. Arrived at Greymouth, we commenced to prospect the town, an occupation that did not take much time.

The main feature here seems to be a very extensive breakwater, necessarily a fine piece of work, for the full force of the Southern Ocean (no summer sea) dashes against the West Coast, and anything built to withstand such a power must needs be strong and stable.

"And rail'd—in good terms, in good set terms."— What can the people in a small place like this possibly find to do, with only a coach-road on the one side, and a wide, turbulent ocean on the other? They cannot fail to be greatly thrown on their own resources, which, to judge by appearances, are not varied, and must be essentially parochial. The town is too far from the real Bush to make many natural pleasures practicable, and there seem to be none created by art. Not even the proximity of gold claims in the neighbourhood could make Greymouth an El Dorado to its most enthusiastic inhabitant.

I wonder if I am sinning against any canon of New Zealand's unwritten, social laws in speaking thus? I am told it is necessary to be very careful, for derogatory comments upon anything distinctly Colonial are not appreciated.

Lately I heard a resident ask a British "globetrotter" how he would like his last remark to have been made about England; whereupon I indulged in a paroxysm of suppressed merriment, for it occurred to me that of all the much-abused countries upon earth, my poor native land bore away the palm.

What is the subject on which the British Isles have not had to stand the test of the world's opprobrium? Some of it, no doubt, is merited, and so has to be endured in silence.

Our arrogance, our dulness, our want of "go," our straitlacedness, our shop-keeping instincts, our love of money and fights for riches, our smoky towns and unsightly buildings, and oh! most fruitful of all, our "villanous climate," which, for ages long, has borne the brunt of every nation's contumely.

But, by the way, is there aught upon the whole surface of this tired, old world, to compare with an English, summer day? One of those early, summer days when the leaves are greenest; when the pure scents that fill the air are from fair flowers that have no hint of languor, nor tropic sensuousness in their fresh, clean perfume; a day when the sky is in tune with the earth; when only to live is to be glad?

I know these days are few, but is not their very rarity an added charm? In sunshine lands rain is prayed for; our sun is a welcome visitant, and

"When he seldom comes, he wished-for comes."

It is not often that I allow myself the pleasure of taking up the cudgels for England; she is so well able to defend herself against calumnies, that she has no need of individual vindication. Perhaps it is being on the shore that makes me think more proudly of the old country to-day! I do not know, but having come back in thought to Greymouth, which is not exciting, I am glad B. has planned excursions for all the time of our stay here, so we shall not be reduced to writing prosy criticisms of our surroundings, nor to defending Britain against her imaginary traducers.

March 7.—To-day we have been to Ngahere (a forest). It is sixteen miles distant by rail; the portion of the line belonging to the Midland Company begins at Stillwater, and some time it is designed to reach Nelson.

I wish I did not hate railways, because I feel I am in honour bound to admire this one, as my husband is its engineer! I certainly find it superior in many respects to the Government lines, and, if I could disassociate myself from myself, I should no doubt be full of praise, and acknowledge it was "much needed," and "most convenient"; but unfortunately, with my stage-coach nature, I cannot live up to the desirability of the locomotive, which always seems to bring destruction in its wake.

', More than once B. has said, that even from an engineer's point of view, this West country is too beautiful for a railway; but I think it is his strong artistic sense which prompts the feeling. As the line has to be made, I am glad its construction is in the hands of one who loves Nature, and will not wantonly destroy the ancient landmarks, nor give a stone for bread, by changing, to suit the modern taste, the beautiful and appropriate Maori designations of the districts where the stations are placed.

"All things that love the sun are out of doors."—Yesterday we had a lovely time in glorious weather. Mrs. Napier Bell, who is spending a month in the station-master's house at Kokiri, situated on the beautiful Arnold River, and on the branch of the Midland Railway which leads to Christchurch, had invited us to a luncheon which was arranged in a tent picturesquely close to the water; this was much pleasanter for us than had it been in the house. Trails of lycopodium and red berries decorated a table covered with all kinds of good things, amongst which was a bowl of curds and thick cream, food fit for the gods.

The daintiness of the repast was in keeping with the taste that had turned even the bare, little stationhouse into a charming retreat.

The Tui's wild song was a melodious accompaniment, exorcising from eating the materialism of mere physical gratification. After luncheon B. took numerous photographs, and in some of these an old man figured who had once been a convict. He looked harmless enough there, engaged in fishing for grayling.

March 12. Concerning various people.—We have been for a long drive, which took Monday and

yesterday to accomplish—fifty miles to Reefton one day and back the next; a pretty good distance with the same pair of horses, though they looked almost as fresh when they returned as when we set out. Nearly all the time we were going by the route of the Midland Railway, whose work is now being pushed forward there, for the most part through country that has been settled a good while, chiefly large, flat spaces between mountain ranges.

When the process of settling is completed, and the land returns its food products, and grain, fruits, and pasture spring up where the wild Bush has been, there is much to admire, both in the landscape, and also in the courage of those who have spent years of unremunerative toil in hope of reaping, what could only be, a tardy harvest.

Judicious cultivation has a distinct beauty of its own, but when thinking of the privations and hardships that have to be undergone by those who are in the vanguard of the struggle, one wonders how it is possible that this island can ever be peopled and brought under the sway of civilization.

To accomplish it a man must literally cut his path through the density of the woods, and hew and hack until he chances on a location to suit his purpose, and then the zealous individual must make a clearing and rear his wooden shanty. By-and-by a track

is made by which food supplies can reach him, but even in this the difficulties are all but insurmountable.

The wife of an early settler who owns a large tract of the country through which we drove, told me that in the "old days" the charge for carriage of goods from Greymouth to Reefton and intermediate places, was seventy pounds a waggon-load. Now it is reduced to four pounds a ton; these waggons, drawn by five, seven, and nine horses, are formidable obstructions to encounter on the road.

Thus do pioneers pay for their enterprise. If a man be willing to leave the old country to come here and work like a convict, and in twenty years reap the fruits of labour from land he has reclaimed by unremitting energy, he will do well, but at what a cost! The veriest drudgery of toil, years of complete isolation, social extinction which is by some considered equal to a deathwarrant, and for goal an income dependent on the weather!

During our drive I saw many things that opened my eyes to the folly of men of birth and education coming here without prospects. Those who have nothing to lose may have something to gain, and for the working man there is a rich harvest to be gleaned in a land of "Eight hours' work, Eight hours' play, Eight hours' sleep, And eight shillings a day!"

But for him who has ambition beyond prospective, material benefit, and a mind that must be fed with mental food, this is no place. Several men were pointed out to me, filling very lowly posts, who were of noble descent, and regretfully I saw that there were "forlorn hopes" here as well as in the centres of civilization.

But while I am moralizing, I should in thought be driving along most comfortably behind a pair of capital horses, well accustomed to such journeys, and handled in a very workmanlike manner by Mr. Pavitt. who took charge of us. B. drove in a "sulky" with one of his assistants, as he had often to make a détour to inspect the line. The road was narrow, and we met so many huge waggons that our buggy required skilful steering. We forded numbers of streams, all fortunately very low, some with curious names, such as "Red Jack's River" and "Dead Man's Creek." Batches of men were working at different points of the route, with their tents pitched in clearings; these were small and white, made of sailcloth, into which it did not seem possible for any one even to creep, but as they have to be furled

and carried snail-fashion on the back, no doubt they are bulky enough for their owners.

Woman was evidently a *rara avis* in these encampments, but each contained a butcher's shop, where the blocks were made of most lovely tree-trunks.

We were amused by seeing over the door of a wooden shanty at Ahaura, a small placard, upon which the following comprehensive intimation was printed:—

## "J. SMITH. HAIR-CUTTING, SHAVING, COFFEE, AND HOT PIES."

There was a suggestion of that breadth of capability about the said J. Smith, which, on a larger scale, has animated our Shoolbreds and Whiteleys to their universally appreciated enterprises.

It was near this place that a droll incident once happened to B., who was driving past in the coach. The day was wet, and he and a friend were inside passengers. Arrived at Ahaura Hotel, the landlord came out, and began an amusing conversation. Addressing the driver, he asked solicitously:

- "Have you room in the coach for a gentleman?"
- "That depends," was the reply; "is your gentleman drunk?"
- "Well, not quite," said the landlord; "he's getting over it."

"All right," responded the driver; "heave him in, we can always make room for an extra prodigal."

The prodigal appeared in the form of a miner, who eminently realized the driver's expectations by staggering into the coach, and at once showing an undue familiarity and a total absence of discrimination. Hardly had he taken his seat before he asked B. for a cigar, and when this was given, he only inhaled two or three puffs, and then threw it away, being too intoxicated to appreciate good tobacco. Immediately afterwards he pleaded for another, but B., thinking this rather rapacious, rolled a cigarette for him, which he smoked, and then fell asleep. He remained in this condition for some time, not even waking when the coach stopped to admit an unassuming Chinaman, who sat down beside the too ardent worshipper of Bacchus.

After a while the sleeper roused himself, and looking round in a dull, drowsy way, discovered poor innocent Johnny at his side, whereupon he brought his horny hand down upon B.'s knee, and in an inebriated, confidential whisper, pointing to the Celestial, muttered: "The cersh o' the country!"

The sequel to this episode is nearly as droll as the story itself, for when the coach arrived at its destination, the "heathen Chinee" paid his fare like a Christian, but when it came to the mining moralist's turn, he was found to have exhausted his capital in too frequent libations, and was forced to leave his "swag" with the driver in lieu of payment.

The Paparoa ranges lay along the horizon, dyed in empurpled bloom, which took the light and shade of sunshine and cloud upon their many furrowed outlines, and made a background of gloomy grandeur for the smiling pastures at their feet.

So on we drove, here into a bit of lovely Bush, and there through a clearing, but the character of the scene did not change. One thing that made me critical as to the taste shown by pioneers, was the planting of poplars and willows round their habitations, the almost aniline colouring of which trees appears harsh beside the sad olive tints of the perpetual forest.

"How quickly nature falls into revolt, when gold becomes her object!"—At last we arrived at Reefton, a mushroom, mining town, with a plethora of publichouses, where the craze for gambling in shares is very strong (this feature is not peculiar to Reefton!), and where the money found yesterday is often lost to-day, leaving the poor digger in a worse plight than before; for what, after all, is this gold-fever

but gambling in its most incurable form? And how seldom is it that riches made in so precarious a fashion return any lasting benefit to the possessor, while the harm done to the land is incalculable!

Gold-miners have a very plausible answer to any aspersion cast on their calling, insisting that the ground they destroy would not be of any use for cultivation. That this is not true in all cases is proved by the American Government having put a stop to alluvial diggings in California. There is no doubt that by the wild thirst for gold much property has been ruined for ever, and many rivers polluted, and turned out of their courses to supply water for the sluices.

Unfortunately, the Government of New Zealand has not yet arrived at the same sensible deduction as the Yankees, who look beyond the mere present, and see that mining, which is in a large degree a transitory calling, cannot possibly pay the country so well in the long run as the more enduring pursuits of agriculture.

Yesterday we drove through the prosperous settlement of Reefton, and then began our return journey, having no adventures except a small one on Ahaura bridge, in the middle of which our buggy came in contact with a huge waggon, and had to be lifted past it. We stopped for luncheon at Totara Flat,

and, arriving at Stillwater late in the evening, stayed at Dick's Bridge Inn, where Mrs. Dick gave us the most delicious tea with cream, and fresh butter, and strawberry jam with the bread; though being almost ravenous, I could not quite forgive the others, who were just as greedy, when they laughed at me for saying I was "giddy with pure enjoyment!"

Concerning "wedges of gold."-To-day Mr. Pavitt took us to the Bank of Greymouth, where the Manager showed us something quite new to me. a room at the back was a furnace, and one of the assistants, who wore a huge apron and long gloves made of felt, opened it, and took out an iron vessel full of molten metal, which he poured into a box also of iron, and put into water to cool, presently turning out a solid mass, about the size of a brick, with the letters N. Z. B. (New Zealand Bank) upon it. This he polished, and then placed in my hands; but it was so heavy I could scarcely hold it, being pure gold, I suggested carrying it away as a worth £2000. memento, but the Manager remarked that the colour was too well known here, and little difficulties in the transit would prevent a graceful exit from the town! He showed us £6000 worth of these blocks, and then the gold in the condition as brought to the bank by miners, in which it is somewhat larger in the grain than sand.

We have now exhausted the sights of Greymouth, and shall be quite ready to commence our return journey to-morrow.

## CHAPTER VIII.

# "O'ERTAKEN AS BY SOME SPELL DIVINE."

"Well, well, I am only saying that Nature is here, and that she has not lost her knack at miracles. At Newport you have no woods, but ours are so grand, and deep, and unconverted. They have those long pauses of conscious silence that are so fine, as if the spirit that inhabits them were holding its breath; and then all the leaves stir, and the pines cheat the rocks with their mock surf, and that invisible bird that haunts such solitudes calls once and is answered, and then silence again."—RUSSELL LOWELL.

Marsden, March 13. "A day out of Catalogue."—After all, we have not been able to ride far, for Leo has taken cold in the Greymouth stable, and was so quickly tired that we thought it wiser to stay here for the night. This has given us an opportunity of spending some hours in the Bush, for which I have long wished.

There is a luxuriance and variety of growth in a lovely tangle near this place, that could not be equalled in beauty had it all been planted instead of coming up at its own sweet will wherever a seed has blown, proving how greatly Nature transcends Art, and puts the much-vaunted science of cultivation to the blush; and when she is at her best, as here, where she has brought all her cunning craft to work, the result is—well, the Bush!

Look where we will, around, above, beneath, hanging from the branches, nestling at the roots, beside the streams, and over the pools, we see countless myriads of ferns, and thick, soft mosses that cling to the trunks, and carpet the ground, so that the step of mortal is noiseless as in a dream.

But the foot must tread reverently, for is not the spot hallowed, and the listening air peopled with memories?

The solemn pines above seem whispering of a time when the stillness was unbroken, and the forest a grand solitude; when sunlight and moonlight crept through the young branches, and filled their growing life with vigour, and made them strong to withstand the tempestuous blasts of winter, of those years when they had no foe save the decaying hand of Time.

Thus they tell of how their youth passed, while above shone the fair sun or placid moon; and starshine too, filtered through all their interlacing boughs, soft rain and gentle dew quenched their thirst; and at their feet lay a covering of ferns, round them curtains of leafy draperies, and beyond, unending aisles of perennial foliage and mysterious shade, but never a sound that was not Nature's own—only the liquid note of the Tui, the resonant cry of the Weka, the Ruru's quaint mutterings, or the Maka maka's bell-like tones, disturbed the stillness.

Alas! all is changed, and for the silence of the forest we have now the slash of the woodman's axe, and the glorious growth of centuries, which the savage left untouched, is doomed to fall beneath the ruthless hand of his white conqueror.

To me there is no more saddening thing than to stand in a noble wood, knowing that ere many years be passed its beauty will have perished.

Ah! why must we ever destroy before we attempt to build up?

Could we only remember that, were the best of human energies brought to bear upon it, not even the brightest genius could form one of these tiniest ferns, or, designing it, make it spring forth! Our pure impotence should keep us humble, and should exorcise all thought of selfishly defacing the possessions we have in trust; for while we are only as spray on the waves of Time, this beautiful earth is the inheritance of all the ages.

What will coming generations say of us if we shall leave their world a darker place than we found it?

I know these theories are old-fashioned and out

of date; in our days of mental and moral change, why should mere outward things be left untouched, when the whole aspect of life is altering?

Manners, customs, faith and loyalty, the sweet and peaceful creeds of our forefathers, are no longer inviolate from the reckless, prevailing spirit, so we can only pray, before our grasp of all we have held sacred be quite unloosed, to be taken hence, that we may, in a happier world, discover the answer to the everlasting "why?"

Jackson's, March 14. The longest day but ends in dreams.—As Leo is better, we have ridden thirty-six miles to-day. We took a different route from Marsden, passing through Kumara, but, before reaching it, we crossed the Teremakau by a bridge. At that point the river is full of tail races, choking up the picturesque banks, and turning the once lovely scene into a desert.

Kumara is a mining centre, boasting even a larger number of public-houses than Reefton; I counted ten in one short street. This settlement, and Dillman's Town almost adjoining, would be good places wherein to study the varied aspects of mining life, and no doubt many a woeful history has been enacted here. A total lack of refinement and taste is exhibited in the way these towns are built, with sluices

running through the streets, forcibly suggesting the idea that the one passion common to the whole population is a desire to find gold quickly and plentifully, and to go!

It is trite to say that the love of money is the root of all evil, yet we repeat it feelingly when we see people living as though to make it were the end and goal of existence, and it is not too much to maintain that money made in such a fashion is an evil.

In this mad pursuit of gold the victim becomes possessed of the demon spirit of avarice; to grasp the glittering tempter, he will pass through fire and water, will suffer hardships innumerable, will spend his years as though they were not his only true capital, which, gone unheeded, will return him nothing, and in the end he will hold himself well rewarded if he be the envied of his fellows, oblivious of the fact that he has cast away the leaves of the roses that will never bloom again, and has, alas, laid the land under a ban so heavy that it seems forgotten alike of man and God.

Coming through these towns into the quiet Bush once more, so great was the contrast, that it was almost like passing altars raised to the Golden Calf, and then entering a temple of the living God.

We forded the Smooth and Rough Waianinni rivers, which must be terrible torrents in flood, and arrived at Taipo in the evening, from whence

we had still some miles to ride, and as we wound through the close Bush the darkness might almost be felt. We went at foot-pace, for we had no means of ascertaining whether we were on the road, except by the instinct of the horses, and the shine of the glow-worms. Queen Titania was holding high revel in her haunts under the ferns, and millions of her tiny lamps were lighted, making the Bush a fallen firmament.

Suddenly from out the blackness ahead came a human voice, "Who goes?" and my thoughts instantly reverted to bushranging days, and I at least expected a demand for money or our lives. I must confess to a feeling of decided relief when we discovered that the voice emanated from a peaceful horseman making his proximity known to us.

The lights of Jackson's looming in sight were very welcome, and we are glad to be housed.

As I sit writing here I am a prey to fanciful imaginings about night, darkness, and the dreams they sometimes bring to the tired soul, and wistfully I think, too, of the dreams which come to us in our waking hours.

My pen wants to run off in rhyme, and so it shall, for at best it is a prosy instrument; being mine, how could it be otherwise?

Dreams and fancies fill the night, Weave their webs of pure delight, And to saddened hearts and lone Bring a comfort all their own, Touched with heavenly light.

Mingling in one magic sweep,
All the treasures of our sleep,
O'er our souls their glamour throw,
Through our silent moments flow
In a mystery deep.

Dreams that take us where they list, Dreams that give us all we missed In the weary, waking days; Coming in such tender ways, None could e'er resist.

Wilder far than fairy lore,
Are these phantasies that store
Brain and soul with visions sweet—
Visions that are all too fleet,
And return no more.

Dreams so fair, will ye not stay? Phantoms that at dawning grey, When our hearts are steeped in bliss, When there seems no world but this, Fade like mists away!

Compton, March 19. Retrospect.—Having only a short ride on Saturday, we again spent our morning in the Bush near Jackson's, which is quite ideal with lovely little shaded creeks flowing through

it, and wonderful mosses and ferns. We had a perfect ride to Otira, the weather being all we could desire.

Now that we are safely home again, I feel that I should almost have liked to have gone through a river in flood, but as we are still to be some time in the Colony, no doubt I shall be gratified by-and-by.

We spent the night at Otira, and had a morning's ride through the Gorge, where the scenes I had known in other guise were now wrapped in mystery, for the mountain-tops were up in cloudland, and light and shade chased the mists through the dense masses of foliage on the rocky heights. The Rata's fires were still burning, and gave to the sombre, olive-toned forest the only autumn tints it ever wears. It was just as beautiful as my first view, though perhaps from the summit somewhat grander.

A keen wind whistled on Arthur's Pass, fresh and invigorating; it was the kind of day that almost intoxicates with wild, free air. The strong breeze blew us along through the bed of the Bealey, over the Waimakariri cutting to the Cass, and there, during the night, it almost blew us and the house away together, but in the morning there was still the same blue sky.

And so, after a night at Castle Hill and the long

MIDLAND RAILWAY BRIDGE, KOWHAI RIVER.

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pull over Porter's Pass, our ride came to an end, much to our regret, for we are all sorry so pleasant a time is over, and that we are to be again on the edge of a crowd.

We have forded many rivers and creeks, and these we found the only rough parts of the route, for the roads throughout are excellent, and quite equal to coach roads at home; some portions are said to be dangerous, but I fancy that is a report set about by coach-drivers who prefer to take people across, though, for my part, I do not think there could be a better way of seeing the country than going as we did.

In memory, all the infelicities and misadventures of a journey slip away like ill-fitting garments, and only the brightness remains.

My most vivid recollections of this happy time will not be of discomfort in bed or board, of rough roads, and rougher fare, but of the wild sweetness of free air, of blue skies, and a gracious sun; of the exhilaration of long gallops, and of well-earned repose at the day's end; of gently flowing rivers, and sudden glimpses of glory in mountain and sky; and, above all, of the great and unspeakable beauty of the untrodden forest.

I only wish I might picture it as it appeared to me, but no mere words seem adequate.

Never could I describe the prodigious majesty of those solitudes, the enchantment of the silences; I can only say, with a heart full of unfading memories—

"The earth is very lovely, O my God; I thank Thee that I live!"

## CHAPTER IX.

#### OLLA PODRIDA.

"Variety's the very spice of life, That gives it all its flavour."

Grand Hotel, Dunedin, April 18, 1890. "Where order in variety we see."—We came here yesterday to visit the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, which closes almost immediately. As we were unable to attend the opening, we think better late than never, and perhaps the end will be as interesting as the beginning. We had our journey in the so-called express, though if that be quick travelling, I wonder what is supposed to be slow? A distance of two hundred and thirty miles in ten hours suggests the very early days of steam locomotion, but as this is the maximum limit of speed on the railways here, I conclude we were the only dissatisfied passengers.

All travelling in this country is tedious, and, except for the word "express" raising deceitful expectations, we might have been indifferent to a progress of only twenty-three miles an hour. The first part of the journey was unutterably wearisome, being over the plains, which seemed to roll away to infinity with a monotony peculiar to flat countries, a monotony chiefly attractive to the farmer. The curious carriages with their iron-bound chairs preclude all idea of comfort, and in a hopelessly stiff and upright position, the long hours had to be spent. As we crossed the plains and the half-dried river beds, the snowy mountains, always a beautiful feature in the landscape, lay on one hand, and on the other, the sea.

We passed Timaru, a pretty picturesque town situated on a bay; then, after another tiresome spell of creeping along, we arrived at Omaru, the "White City," so called from the prevalence of stone used for its buildings. Here on the line is a "switchback," necessitating a reverse of the engines. We struck inland up the hills, passing the celebrated Blue Skin in the darkening twilight, through which we could just discern the rather dangerous route we were taking round the bays, high up the hillsides, in some places seeming almost to be hanging over the water.

At last we reached this "City of the South," where the Scotch race predominates and retains its mothertongue, a fact which strikes me as rather odd.

It is not strange that the original settlers, who came straight from the old country, should keep the accent of their youth; but that their children, born and brought up in the Colony, should still hand it on is certainly surprising. Doubtless it is because Scotch is the hardest of all dialects to forget, and it is an undisputed fact that those who speak it believe they have command of the purest and most forcible of languages.

Dunedin is a fine town, with a solid substantiality about its stone buildings that is lacking in other cities of the Colony; it covers a large area of land, and seems to be running up the sides of several hills, reminding us again of "Auld Reekie." There are two or three noble churches that stand out boldly on their lofty sites, and a beautiful land-locked harbour leads down to the sea, where, at its entrance, stands Port Chalmers.

We have spent the whole day in the Exhibition buildings, for rain has been coming down in torrents, and there has been no possibility of exploring the town. I think the show, taken as a whole, justifies the Colomy's pride in it; and, compared with the one I saw in Edinburgh, it decidedly holds its own.

Taking into consideration the facts that the main industries of the country range themselves chiefly round two centres, sheep-rearing and flax-growing, and that all minor employments are connected, however remotely, with these principal sources of trade,

and although many may be the ramifications into which these products are capable of branching, they are, to begin with, nothing more than an insignificant animal and an unimportant-looking vegetable, it is extraordinary what a fund of interest is opened up by their management and treatment.

In many courts of the Exhibition these processes are exemplified, and the career of a sheep from—I was going to say babyhood, but I suppose lambhood would be better—until its wool is woven into tweeds, and the history of flax,\* from its condition in the swampy marshes to the strong ropes which are eventually twisted from its tenacious fibre, all are fully illustrated.

The mineral exhibits are also very good, more especially those from New South Wales, which cover a large area and are very comprehensive. One of the greatest attractions in the building is a switchback, which draws a constant stream of young and foolish persons, evidently bent on breaking their necks, a result that appears highly probable; one trial, I know, was more than sufficient to satisfy me.

The prevailing topic here is Influenza, which insinuating Russian fiend has at last made his *début* in the Colony, whither many had fled from Europe to escape it. There seems as much dread in people's

<sup>\*</sup> Phormium tenax.

minds on the subject of this very evidently misnamed disease as though it were veritably the black plague in a new guise. I hope it will not make a long stay here; probably it will hardly find, in this pure air and healthy race, a suitable arena for its fitful vagaries.

April 21.—To-day we have spent nearly all our time in the cars, a very pleasant means of locomotion in a town where almost all the streets are nearly perpendicular. These trams are not drawn by horses, but propelled by an endless rope worked by machinery, a much more humane method than the use of horse-power. In this way we have seen the suburbs agreeably enough, though it was a somewhat heart-fluttering experience feeling ourselves going down an incline of one in three.

Having exhausted the resources of Dunedin, we are ready to turn our faces homewards again. The towns in a new country have no interest lent by tradition, and their history is often modern and bizarre enough to pall on the most progressive spirit, while to the contemplative mind, imbued with veneration for the architecture of bygone ages, they only suggest the utilitarianism that rarely builds for the future.

Compton, May I. A pitiless visitor.—How the year

is disorganized in this place! An autumn May Day is a positive anachronism which is almost an insult to memory and a reproach to custom. The weather is bright and clear, and it might be possible to cheat ourselves into thinking we had hybernated, had the leaves not fallen from the English trees, inducing a general appearance that is never born of spring.

If I let my pen go I shall begin to moralize over the old May days at home, and this would be foolish, because I am weak and feeble, and in the mood that makes me look on the black side of everything, the result of Influenza, to the malign influence of which I succumbed, and for some days have been a victim.

This has made me very sorry for myself—a degraded mental condition—and I quite understand now why its advent should be so much dreaded, for it smites and spares not, and in a moment the strongest are laid low.

The extraordinary thing about this weird complaint, to my thinking, is the hold it takes upon the spirit, and the darkness and depression it plants there, so that while the suffering body is racked with pain, the mind is also a prey to all the gloomy forebodings and fantastic terrors that imagination can conjure.

It is hardly possible to believe the Egyptians were

exempt from Influenza; in the long list of their grievous plagues, though unrecorded, it must have had a place, it is so much like an Eastern form of torture.

Of course it has its amusing side, and were it not for this phase in suffering, how could we get through our lives at all? The different ways in which people describe its symptoms, and the remarkable names they call it, are very droll. An old woman said to me the other day that her poor husband had been so troubled with "that there the la grippe," which made me think that, like Mark Twain's German lady, the malady in this instance was certainly "over-described."

Compton, August. "Every one can master a grief but he that has it."—I have not been writing here for some time, partly because I have had little to say, and also because that little has not been very interesting.

There have been all kinds of social festivities, dances, theatricals, afternoon and evening parties, concerts, sports, boating-picnics, and a host of other amusements too numerous to mention. And now I am employing my time in selling tickets for a concert I am going to give in the drawing-room, for the purpose of making a small sum with which to buy some books

for the Women's ward in the Hospital, where I go every week to see the patients.

I am not very partial to the *rôle* of saleswoman, but one must bury the feelings, seemingly under a coat of mail, when on such a mission. I shall not mind the task if I am able to raise a sufficient sum to procure anything to alleviate, even in a small degree, the sufferings of these poor, bedridden women.

It is a mournful pleasure to enter the quiet wards where some are lying who have "left hope behind," and to compare myself, healthy and joyous, with the pain-stricken forms waiting in such utter patience, and as I watch the faces brighten at the sight of a flower, or the sound of a kindly voice, I feel that here at least it is possible to inspire, though but for a brief time, forgetfulness of suffering, by the simple means of interest and sympathy.

Sometimes a rebellious spirit assails me, for why should they have only the husks, while I have the grain of this world's goods?

Thinking thus, I come away from their bedsides with a very humble heart and a profound longing to help.

Compton, September 6. In which I do not find fault.—The concert was a great success; my friend Mrs. Wilding gave me the aid of her brilliant talent

and delightful energy, and some other friends helped me with music and singing. Two hundred people were seated in the drawing-room, and during the interval we had tea, and, as most of the audience were known to me, it was more like an afternoon party than a public entertainment.

With the proceeds I have been enabled to buy a hundred and forty books and two book-cases, with which the patients at the Hospital seem much pleased.

The beautiful spring days have come again, and remind me that it is just a year since we landed in New Zealand. My present self is disposed to look at things in a very different way from that of the rather disconsolate individual who inwardly condemned the place and everything in it on first arrival—especially the hats of the men!

I hope I did not allow these feelings too pronounced a place in my social relations, though occasionally it was difficult, when I was asked how I liked Christchurch (the usual formula to new-comers), to refrain from saying outright that I cordially disliked it. Not even in the recesses of so private a volume as my journal would I utter so mutinous a thought, were it not that I have turned over a new leaf, and have found much to appreciate and admire, where formerly all seemed barren.

It is such a glorious day, I feel inclined to transpose the words of Solomon to suit my fancy and the sunshine:—

"For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the *Tui* is heard in the land."

These words have so wrought in me that I have put them into verses, though why I should iterate in halting words the splendid rhythm of that Song of Songs, I know not; but the wind, or the sun, or the wild, sweet, spring feeling, has made me write them, and as they are written, I will enter them here:—

With the first breath of spring
Is borne an odour from the fresh, brown earth,
Sweet as the perfumed birth
Of flowers, and everything
With life's awakening,
Of gladness tells, and mirth.

Within the misty wood,
Under the dripping leaves faint sounds are heard,
As though earth's soul was stirred;
While in her changeful mood,
To impulse pure and good,
By some almighty word.

Sweet peace calm nature fills;
The waters held so long in frozen sleep
Arise, and to the deep
Send forth their laughing rills,
Which, from the cloud-capped hills,
In joyous dances leap.

The days go brightly on,

For each brings nearer still the blissful goal

Of summer, and the soul

Awakes. Stern winter's gone,

And jocund spring anon

Her favours fresh will dole.

Up in the branches high,
Near the dim forest's fringe the Tui's call,
And o'er the pine trees tall
Gay echo makes reply;
While soft from sun and sky,
A rapture seems to fall.

Bright joys around are spread;
Summer's fair greenery that bloomed so brave
Has found a dreary grave,
Forgotten, withered, dead;
But o'er its lowly bed
Fresh leaves will toss and wave.

And life is sweeter too

For mortals who inhale this breath of spring;
Like birds upon the wing,
Their thoughts fly up anew,
To the Eternal blue,
While with glad hearts they sing.

Gone is the sense of care,

That weighed so heavily e'en yesterday—
Gone with the chilling ray
Of winter's sun, for fair
Are life's young hopes, and rare;
Why must they pass away?

The note of sadness will come, try as we may to elude it, for, as the loveliest scene is often marred by

some trifling flaw, the happiest life by some hidden sorrow, so in the sweet days of spring when the world seems

"Ages nearer the beginning when the heavens were closer to us,"

and Nature's footsteps stir again in that cycle of whose endless perpetuity she must have grown so weary, the undertones are struck in minor keys, and in the wild, unloosed liberty of earth and sky, there is the very spirit of transientness and change, which to the human soul bears a deeper meaning than comes of memory alone.

November 12. Under the pine trees.—After all, this materialistic, nineteenth century has its advantages, for till now freezing accommodation was unknown, as also surprise like that we have enjoyed to-day upon the opening of a delightful hamper of splendid grouse, packed in purple and white heather, sent by the Kellys from Inverness-shire. All the charming contents look as fresh as if they had only travelled over the Border, and the sight of them makes us feel not so much "out of it" though so far away.

I have come to write here, for it seems such a waste of precious sunshine and heedlessness of the season's profusion to sit indoors, and yet while I can

see the roses how can I do anything but look at them? The morning hours are all I have for quiet contemplation at present, for of course garden-parties are rife.

The word "garden" is at all times a lure to me: "Come and see my garden," is a call I can rarely resist. The added word "party" (I may confess, as there is no one within sight or sound) is sometimes a superfluous addition; but yesterday there was a charming gathering at Ilam, and Mrs. John Baker, whom I always so much enjoy meeting, had brought Mr. and Mrs. Alex Strachey, her brother and sister-in-law; and as they are here for only a short time, people seem to wish to make the most of their stay, which they do also, for Mr. Strachey had a coach, and as I wanted to be home in time for my dinner-party last night, he offered to make his team do their best on my behalf, and certainly the drive with them was delightful.

"I hope I don't intrude!"—Christchurch has lately been honoured by a visit from the renowned comedian, Mr. J. L. Toole and his company, who have been making themselves very popular in their social as well as in their professional capacities. It has been a great pleasure to hear our old favourite at this side of the globe, and the genuine humour of the very human characters he portrays has roused

the enthusiasm of theatre-goers here, who seldom have such a treat offered to them.

He and some of his company dined here the other night, and before leaving I ventured to ask him if, at his Benefit in the theatre the following week, he would give his celebrated imitations of deceased actors, whereupon, in his own quaint way, he replied: "I have been waiting ever since dinner for you to ask me to do it here."

"Much as we should have enjoyed it," I responded, "I should never have thought of such a thing."

He quickly replied: "Well, with your permission I am going to do it now;" and forthwith began, and a charming performance it proved, and very much it was appreciated.

We sincerely regretted the shortness of the company's stay in Christchurch, for the popular Manager, with his unique personality, and also the members of his company, are much and deservedly liked, and they have made many friends here.

Compton, December. In evil case.—We have just returned from a rather exciting little visit to Napier, where we went—with a decided lack of originality—in the Rimutaka.

I felt that, having been for seven months in one

place (I have known the time when nothing less than the stocks could have effected this), I had "broken the record," and earned the change, which was the only one that suggested itself as feasible at the moment.

Arriving at Napier on the Sunday, the steamer was again anchored in the roads, and we looked forward to spending most of our time on shore; but from Monday till Thursday the tenders were unable to cross the bar, and we had to amuse ourselves as well as we could on the ship, prisoners bon gré, mal gré, the sport of neither high wind nor bad weather, but of an ugly swell in the harbour, caused by a storm at sea.

To put it mildly, this swell was irritating, for having the land so near, and yet so far, was a source of great annoyance.

Napier had not seemed very attractive to us for a sojourn on our first visit, but the mere fact of the impossibility of going on shore was quite enough to rouse our combative and contradictory instincts sufficiently to make us realize that it was the one and only thing we desired to do.

However, even in our restricted limits we were to have an exciting time, which almost seemed as if provided by the powers of the air for our especial benefit. On Wednesday morning about four o'clock, when I was sleeping the sleep of the just (by which I do not mean to arrogate to myself any qualities of this much-quoted individual, excepting only his capacity for slumber), I was suddenly disturbed by the sound of a tremendous report, after which I naturally lay quaking in my berth, imagining that the boilers had burst, or that we had run on to a rock (which rock, of course, had to be conjured up for the occasion, there being none in the bay).

Following this detonation were a few moments'of quiet, and then the welcome vibrations of the engines, and I knew we were steaming off again.

When I had dressed and gone up on deck, I learned that our cable had parted, and, anchorless, we were drifting quietly to the shore, from which we had only been separated by a tragically-short distance.

I felt this was having all the interest of a shipwreck without its grim realities!

Our next excitement happened at seven o'clock, after a fresh anchor had been cast.

We were all calmly enjoying our breakfast, when the quartermaster appeared with the message that the *Rangitiki* was flying distress signals for immediate assistance. We all rushed on deck, and found so much to engross our attention, that breakfast and all things else were forgotten in the breathless interest of the spectacle that met our view.

During the week seven or eight sailing ships had anchored round us in different parts of the bay; all of these had broken their cables during the dreadful swell of the night, and the *Rangitiki* (belonging to the New Zealand Shipping Company) had drifted perilously near the land, and was now in imminent danger of being dashed to pieces. We heard afterwards that the sailors had hurriedly collected their belongings, and prepared to swim, while to the shore life-saving apparatus had been brought, and crowds had assembled all along the beach.

The Rimutaka was not freighted, and was too much out of the water to be easily manipulated, and the greater danger of drifting on to the shore in her case had to be avoided, so Captain Greenstreet dare not offer much help. Fortunately, during our breathless suspense, two small tenders were seen to be making gigantic efforts in the waves which tossed them about like corks, to cross the dangerous narrow bar dividing the wharf from the bay, where, in a similar extremity, the poor, little, anxious tug, Boojum, was wrecked, when all on board were drowned.

The tenders gallantly held to their task, and at last safely rode over the boiling flood-gates, and steamed out into the troubled but unbroken sea. Reaching the *Rangitiki*, they at once began to help as well as they were able, though it was many hours before she

was again in deep water, for the cable with which they were towing her broke at a critical moment, and all the chief difficulties had to be encountered a second time; and even when she was safe, she had to be supplied with an anchor by the *Rimutaka*, for she had lost both her own in the night. It was very fortunate we had one to spare.

On Thursday the sea was calm enough to allow us to land at the Spit, and go on to Napier, and from thence to Wellington, where we spent a week. The German Squadron being stationed in the harbour, there were many festivities going on, some of which we enjoyed. The slightest provocation is sufficient excuse in this country for getting up all kinds of entertainments, generally of that informal and spontaneous nature so much more delightful than premeditated frivolities.

## CHAPTER X.

### BY SILENT SHORES AND DEVIOUS WAYS.

"Think you there's aught in the lumbering hoards
Of books that decay on your shelves,
To vie with the great-voiced wondrous words
That solitudes say to themselves?"

DE LEUVILLE.

Compton, January 1, 1891. Another milestone passed.

—New Year's Day again, come to repeat that time is fleeting, and life brief as a tale that is told!

The months that have gone since its last anniversary have been winged messengers, that stayed not to parley, but flew, as though having accomplished their carthly tasks, they were obeying a divine mandate which called them quickly hence.

The glory of summer, the tranquil peace of autumn, the chill of winter, and the mystery of spring; thus the year has gone, taking with it joys and sorrows alike.

Backwards and forwards the mind, like a pendulum, swings from what has been to what will be, and as this new milestone on life's road arrests the hurrying steps, the words that are written thereon in shining characters, "Ye have not passed this way heretofore," confront the wandering gaze, and centre the pilgrim's wistful thoughts upon their timely warning.

As we enter the portals of another new year, we remember the long list of our failures with unavailing regret, but take heart of grace to plan anew resolves for the future, which are born of Hope, and ofttimes the children of the "good courage" needed and not withheld.

Compton, January 8. In contemplation.—We have been casting about and consulting the maps to find a pleasant place to visit, for again the restlessness is making itself felt. It seems such a waste of time to be long settled near a town when elsewhere there are "woods and un-penfolded spaces."

The result of the investigation has been that I have taken passages in one of the Union Company's steamers for a voyage to the Sounds, which are situated on the south-west coast of this island, and are said to be very fine, even excelling in grandeur the fjords of Norway. The s.s. *Tarawera* makes three excursions during the months of January and February, and each of these, from Port Chalmers to Milford Sound and back, occupies ten days. During

that time the passengers are taken into many of the inlets, and have thus more than glimpses of the interesting scenery. It all promises to be very agreeable, and it will no doubt be a pleasant mode of visiting the south-west coast, especially as, at present, it is the only means possible.

My journal will have to be closed until our return. In anticipation I can imagine the limited room in our cabin, and can foresee the impossibility of trying to write in so cramped a space, for I find the list of those going on the steamer is so large that Miss Mein, Gwlad, and I have to share one small state room. B. unfortunately cannot accompany us to the Sounds, as he is obliged to be on another part of the West Coast during our absence.

Compton, January 31. Retrospect.—We have returned from our little voyage, I think with mingled feelings. Perhaps I am too hard to please, and expect more than I deserve; and yet I went with the very simple object of enjoying the scenery, and I think, had no other form of entertainment been provided, the time would have been most agreeably spent.

It is assumed by those in authority, who are most anxious to do everything in their power to make

these cruises successful, that something more than mere scenery is required, and they must of course know the tastes of the majority better than I; so our evenings were filled with a round of small festivities, consisting of concerts, dances, tableaux, fireworks, and other amusements, doubtless planned for the recreation of some who would find the contemplation of Nature alone monotonously irksome, while others are forgotten whom these so-called "pleasures" please not at all.

Notwithstanding the unspeakable beauty of the surroundings, and with all due deference to the well-meant efforts of the Union Company, the after-impression is less sublime and enduring than it might have been, had the vessel carried fewer passengers, whose specific object was enjoyment from the scenery alone.

On the 16th we left home for Dunedin, again in the "express," and the following day went by train to Port Chalmers, where the *Tarawera* was lying, and after going on board we steamed off at five, amidst much cheering from the crowds waiting to see us start, and with a sound of repeated firing from the cannon of other Union boats in the harbour.

Turning to look at our fellow-passengers, with that peculiar feeling of remoteness, and—must it be said?—of antagonism, that is so often the sensation felt

when strangers are thrown together (though, happily for human nature, it generally disappears upon closer acquaintance), we find a varied assemblage, amongst whom, after the first gene has been conquered, we discover some congenial spirits.

Before that time arrives, however, there is an interval of dire despair, which we pass in our cabin a prey to dark dejection, and between paroxysms of such suffering as only "those who go down to the sea in ships" can comprehend, we ask ourselves why we were so infatuated as to come upon this wild and choppy ocean, thinking thereon to find enjoyment.

There is no doubt that the short voyage to the Bluff, which we reached early in the morning, is often a severe trial to even good sailors, amongst whom I do not count myself. I think the fact that the steamer was freighted only for a pleasure cruise was reason sufficient for the motion being so disagreeable, though, happily, our troubles were not of long duration.

After having taken in more passengers at the Bluff, we steamed on again, and soon entered Preservation Inlet—well named indeed, for it was to us a timely and sure haven. A placid, lake-like Sound, dotted with wooded islets, and surrounded by hills, which appeared as if draped by bush, rising range

behind range till the far distance was reached; a calm and peaceful scene, not like the rugged grandeur of the more remote Sounds, but having a beauty peculiar to itself, enhanced by the solitariness that is one of the chief features of these southern fjords.

A sabbath stillness lay upon the landscape, which we, alas! destroyed. There is always something essentially fussy and vulgar about a small steamer. The *Tarawera* was no exception to this rule; and she possessed a whistle, poetically called "siren," whose luring song was an eldritch screech, proving a deafening interruption in a corner of earth which has for crown the "utmost quietude." The object of using it was simply to produce an echo, but it was altogether desecrating, and as terrifying as a maniac's yell in the aisles of a cathedral. However, we had to "dree our weird," for the echo was evidently part of a programme arranged for our delectation.

Doubtless it was weak-minded to be influenced by so transient an annoyance, but it was an item in the disturbing element, while the noise and flurry made by the presence of so many pleasure-seekers seemed to profane the rapt hush of nature.

We steamed through Preservation Inlet to the end of Long Sound, a panorama of infinite beauty, for, with every turn, a new vista opened up before the wondering gaze that was never weary of the sombre colouring of tree and mountain, nor of the serene stillness of the transparent water, in whose seemingly fathomless depths were again repeated the splendours of the woods, while deeper still were revealed the true sea-forests, growing in a wild luxuriance that has never been disturbed.

Back we returned to the inlet, and anchored for the night in a picturesque little spot, with the hideous, but no doubt appropriate name, of Cuttle Cove; the fish from which it is called largely abounding in its waters, so much so that we were frequently assailed in our little boat next morning by cries of "devils" having been caught, which, to say the least, sounded depraved. However, when the creatures were dragged on board, though with their cruel tentacles vicious-looking enough, they were scarcely so disconcerting to their captors as would have been any emissaries from the legion of his Satanic Majesty.

Cuttle Cove must have presented an unusually populated appearance on that Sunday afternoon, for, in addition to the *Tarawera*, H.M.S. *Curaçoa* and the New Zealand Government steamer *Hinemoa* were also there. Both these vessels were cruising round the coast, the *Hinemoa* having been to the Snares to decide upon the site for a lighthouse.

Monday morning the sky looked suspiciously

lowering, and we much feared a downpour; however, only slight showers came to mar our pleasure.

Nothing short of a waterspout would have kept us from the boats, for already we were weary of the *Tarawera*, whose awnings and covered decks seemed cramped and prison-like, where the freedom and beauty of the environment constantly tempted us forth.

There were six boats, and it had been arranged that the list for each, containing from fifteen to twenty passengers, should be adhered to throughout the voyage. We, fortunately, made a happy selection, both as regards company and boat, and the officer in charge was most attentive.

We had a long day's deep-sea fishing in the cove, and some amusement in waiting for bites, which often almost drew the hand that held the line down into the depths below, when there would be an interval of excitement, though the long cord was drawn in frequently only to show that the hook had fastened itself to another at the opposite side of the boat, and that the supposed bite had been the inextricable mingling of the two lines. The greater part of the spoil was butter-fish, some of which was cooked for our luncheon on shore, and it was certainly the first fish in the Colony that had seemed to me worth eating, for, excepting frost-fish, which is very seldom

procurable, most of the finny tribe here, I consider, have little flavour.

Towards evening we returned to the steamer and began to study our fellow-prisoners, in which pursuit there was necessarily much speculation; but we indulged our imaginings, and so invented all kinds of situations, which probably had little foundation in fact.

Here figured the bridegroom who never left his wife's side, and other wedded couples who had passed that elysian stage, and who found solace and sympathy elsewhere. There were those who helped to "boss" the ship, and those, too, whose loud voices dominated the dinner-table; the youth who religiously waxed his moustache every morning, and the beauty whose curls were the wonder of all beholders; several engaged girls, and girls also whose behaviour was somewhat significant of a willingness to bear up under a similar fate. There were "foreigners" from Lancashire, and cockneys from Australia; while amongst all these were others who, without the characteristics which command attention of a kind, were nevertheless more congenial to the time and place.

A strange and rather oddly-assorted company, brought together by chance for a short period, probably never to cross paths in this world again. Of course we overhear droll conversations, as well as curious stories, some of which illustrate certain phases of political life in the colonies, and one or two of these I must not forget.

It would appear (with all due deference to the immortal poet) that corruption does occasionally "win more than honesty" in, say, Great Queen Victoria-land. A member of the House of Representatives there had done some parliamentary work for a certain constituency, a committee of which, to show their appreciation of his services, wrote, thanking him for what he had effected, and begged that he would accept the cheque for a hundred pounds which they enclosed. To their letter they received an indignant reply from the honourable member, who assured them that he was greatly insulted by being offered a bribe for merely doing his duty. With this letter was a cheque upon his own bank for a hundred pounds.

Had there been no sequel to the story, the conduct of the man would have seemed above reproach; but, unfortunately, on presenting his cheque at the bank, it was found that there were no assets!

To corroborate the fact that labour representatives in the above dominion are not chosen from the educated classes, it was told of one of them that, speaking to a friend on the subject of a banquet given by the Governor, to which he and his wife had not been invited, he remarked contemptuously:

"Not that we should have gone to the Government 'Ouse spread, even if we'd been asked;" adding, with an air of superiority: "not us, indeed; me and my Missus we never meal out!"

The hold of the *Tarawera* had been turned into a very presentable little theatre, and a quartette party from Dunedin often performed therein. But the days only were interesting to me, so I will be like some children I know, who, in reading, skip over the dull parts of a book to arrive at something amusing; and I will leave most of the evenings out altogether, as I wished they could have been left out at the time when there was no possibility of skipping them.

Tuesday morning we started at five o'clock, and steamed away in glorious weather, though, alas! outside Preservation Inlet, there loomed the sea before we could enter Dusky Sound, our next haven of refuge. Happily the waves were kind, and the distance being short, the dignity of the bad sailors was maintained, and their reward was a vision of scenes, the beauty of which only a poet could adequately describe.

One after another come in succession these fjords, which make their way amongst mountains that tower far above, and seem to pierce the very sky itself. At their base, bush-covered hills, down whose sides shower countless cascades, some from the mountaintop, in thin white lines, while others dance over rock and shingle, and fall into the Sound below in multitudinous leaps and feathery spray. It is hard to say which

## "Seaward-gazing mountain gorge"

is the loveliest; each has distinctive features; but there are two characteristics common to all—the freshness and bloom of unspoiled Nature, and a solitude, only found in those rare precincts that are—

"The world forgetting by the world forgot."

Dusky Sound alone bears a poetic name, for the others are called after pioneers, who laboured under the disadvantage of possessing such appellations as Smith, Hall, Daggs, and Thomson, which appear libellous when indicating such grandeur. Surely the inappropriateness could not have struck these self-constituted godfathers, or the prospects of knowing themselves handed down to posterity as discoverers was fame too tempting to resist.

What could be imagined more prosaic than "Wet Jacket Arm," the name of our next anchorage? It almost seems as though so slight a matter as a damp garment was not a sufficient reason for baptizing a

place, though in a rain-storm, with a watery title, which it ever retains, be the weather fair or foul.

Strange to say, this Sound, where we might have expected rain, was the only one in which we had uninterrupted sunshine, and we were told we did not see it to perfection; for after a heavy shower the hillsides are sheets of leaping waterfalls. I greatly preferred the cloudless day, for I could not imagine any added charm that could have been bestowed. The interminable twists and turns give to this land-locked arm of the sea all the appearance of a lake.

It is easy to believe that the noble mountains which guard it on every side are really the height of from four to five thousand feet; for, looking at them from the sea-level, their true proportions can be appreciated to the full, whereas this is not the case with inland mountain ranges viewed from their base, as their height is also estimated from the often far-distant sea, though this is reached only by a gradual descent.

Anchor was dropped for the night in the "Arm." At the head of this Sound was a bit of true New Zealand tangle; great boulders and piles of rock, whose strange shapes were partially concealed by exquisite mosses and lichens of every shade and hue, and round them tussocks of waving grasses; but never a hint of human habitation, for that would have

been as incongruous there as a patch of native bush in the busy thoroughfare of a town.

The boats lay basking in the sun, and we in them, our mood too idle for anything but quiescent enjoyment. My mind was in a perfectly passive condition, and upon it the beauty around impressed itself indelibly.

It is comforting to know that even now, when the scenes are no more visible to the outward sense, I still possess in memory another quiet resting-place for thought when it is weary of wandering up and down amidst the chaotic disturbance of this nine-teenth-century life; which is only another way of saying that—

"To me High mountains are a feeling, but the hum Of human cities torture."

Perhaps I reiterate this sentiment too often; but in the confiding secrecy of my journal the mask is off! I know it might be said of me that "there is one thing which small minds always find room for, and that is great prejudices;" but, alas! I fear even this knowledge does not make me more tolerant of the modern spirit of progression and fuss.

In the early morning of Wednesday, we again started, having a longer détour before us, through

Breaksea Sound, then up the coast to Doubtful, Smith, and Thomson Sounds, and later in the day to George Sound, where we remained until Friday, so that arrangements might be carried out there for holding a regatta.

• • • •

Mr. Smith is much to be congratulated on the beauty of the fjord, to which he has unfortunately given his name. Its characteristics suggest infinite conjecture as to which of the sons of that wandering and ubiquitous family could have been the Smith who first steered into this lovely Sound. Happily he has left no trace of his presence, saving only the familiar appellation which greets travellers everywhere, alike on signboards of rudest, drinking shanties, and in the designations of the sublimest parts of earth.

### CHAPTER XI.

## "HERE AT THE QUIET LIMIT OF THE WORLD."

"The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm
By thoughts supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye."

WORDSWORTH.

More retrospect. "For art may err, but nature cannot miss."—A few years ago a picturesque view could be seen and enjoyed in peace, for if a memory of it was desired, it usually took the form of a flower or a fern, a hurried description in a notebook, or at most, a few pencil strokes for the portfolio.

Alas! those days have departed, the terrible glass eye is abroad, and that characteristic of our age, the photographing traveller, is in every path.

At the first glimpse of a desirable landscape, the

dreaded machine is hurriedly put together, the fatal black cap donned, a sight taken, and, ere a word can be spoken, the scene is "shot," such being the extraordinary expression in vogue with these wholesale executioners.

No spot on earth is safe from their endeavours, and it is quite impossible to avoid their all-pervading presence. Of course we must allow that they have as much right to carry away an impression by this means as we of a more romantic mind have to take it in our hearts; and, within limits, even the amateur photographer may be harmless. But his craze is like the letting in of water, which simply sweeps away all barriers; and, in illustration of this, I may cite the instance of the day in Hall's Arm, when surely the genii of this modern craft must have been holding high revel, for upon this grand picture were turned no less than thirteen cameras, some of them so small that the only reason which could have prompted their use must have been the honour and glory of being "up to date."

And what did they try to portray?

Calm, translucent water with the mystery of unfathomed depths below its fair and placid surface; in the near foreground, an islet like a giant's footstool, just a tiny atom of perfect, bosky bush. On every side, tier upon tier of hill ranges, with a wealth of closegrown, sombre-hued forest stealing up from the very water's edge. Beyond again the mountains, and the everlasting snows lying on the glacier's frozen breast.

A perfect scene, a perfect day; but I think the minds of some were not quite in tune, or how could they have had the hardihood to attempt to reproduce the picture with a quarter-plate camera on a moving deck?

Their utmost efforts having been expended, and the shriek of the siren once more sent forth to drag some much-abused echo out of its rocky fastness, we turned towards the sea by way of Thomson Sound, which needs no further comment than that it is bleak and bare, as doubtless was the mind of its godfather, and is not much belied by its unsuggestive name.

We arrived in George Sound at noon, and anchored within sight of a roaring torrent which looked suspiciously full, and led us to suppose that as regards weather our luck had deserted us; and this, unfortunately, proved true, for by-and-by the rain commenced, at first in a fine drizzle, but later at Milford it became a steady downpour, which is the normal condition of climate there.

Notwithstanding our garments being in an exceedingly clammy state, we persisted in using the boat, and after fishing for some hours (during which time we caught a shark over five feet long, and a lobster that had been entangled in the deep lines), we attempted an inroad into the Bush, where we were not only soaked from above, but almost swamped from below, for we sank inches in wet moss, and slipped over supple jacks into hidden creeks so often, that our shoes and tempers were at length utterly demoralized, though even then we scorned the thought of returning to the ship for tea "high and dry," and persisted in having it on shore.

With that lack of far-sightedness common on such occasions, no wood had been brought from the steamer, and the poor little flame that was emitted from the dripping twigs required much coaxing before it consented even to hiss, so that we were tempted to ask if the game was worth the candle.

A candle! What a boon that would have been to help the feeble spark. Presently, however, something that resembled a fire, though still wild and fitful, enabled the "billy" to boil, and we had tea with a plentiful addition of rain-water, not a desirable ingredient.

Great excitement prevailed on board the following morning, when the regatta was to be held, and the numerous individuals who were to take part in it had donned the colours of their respective boating clubs, which gave them a gay and festive appearance. The sky, alas! had not put on its gala aspect, and

nothing could have been more dull and depressing than the state of the weather.

The first few competitions were between the sailors and stewards; then came others in which the officers and passengers rowed. The boats were heavy and cumbersome, and of course not built for racing.

Afterwards the most interesting event took place between the girls, in which four boats competed, called respectively New South Wales, Christchurch, Victoria, and Dunedin. In the first of these Gwlad rowed "three," and after a well-pulled race, over a course of half a mile, her boat won by a length.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, we went fishing again, and the honour of having the four champions with us served to keep us from feeling doleful, though the elements persisted in being unpropitious. There is surely some curious quality in the rain of the West Coast; not that it is by any means less soakingly wet, but it does not drown the spirit, nor check enterprise so effectually as clsewhere, while there is often a sense of pleasure in being saturated, for the compensations are so great.

What a constant delight it is to watch the cloudwraiths steal over the hills, now crowning them, now fading into space, to make way for other aërial hosts which take their place in endless succession, while below, amidst the close and serried ranks of forest trees, through whose density it almost seems a spear point could not penetrate, these filmy mists wander and hover, like perplexed spirits seeking in vain a quiet resting-place.

And of the beauty of the Bush my heart is never weary, for in it I always see countless charms and fresh enchantments.

There surely is the most wonderful carpet ever designed! What loom could hold the many-tinted tones of those mosses that conceal, with such tender care, the bare ground, rough stones, and fallen trees, or, holding them, could weave a covering like that of the great Mother?

What painter has ever pictured all the mystery and marvels of one tiny glimpse through interlacing boughs and screening shade?

What musician has evoked a strain that echoes the magic tones the Maka-maka trills from his exultant little throat?

What sculptor has graven an image noble as the outline of the everlasting hills?

It is always difficult to leave the Bush, even in thought, and sometimes the description attempted seems stupid and prosaic, and might be omitted altogether were mine not a journal of faithful records, good and bad alike. This time, however, I only go from one Elysium to another, for I can transport

myself in briefest thought to our next haven, and though my bodily self had to wait the *Tarawera's* pace to cross the stretch of sea that lay between, my eager spirit, held back by no such material conditions, is even now awaiting to steer through the narrow strait where the vessel did not

" Keep pace with my expectancy, and fly."

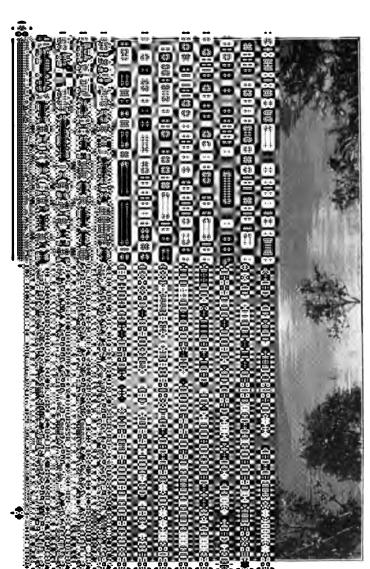
MILFORD SOUND!—The very name calls up so many memories that I must pause to choose, for innumerable impressions beset me every time I recall "this same blessed Milford."

How well the great, grim walls of fortress-like rocks guard the jewel of priceless treasure that lies beyond!

At both sides of the inlet from the sea they tower, and through this almost forbidding and gloomy gateway we entered, awed by the majesty of the well-nigh perpendicular mountains glittering with countless streams and waterfalls.

Penetrating yet further, we had at length before us that grandest of all the southern fjords, and I asked myself, with Imogene, how this land "was made so happy as to inherit such a haven"?

Here the hills rear their lofty pinnacles precipitously eight thousand feet above the all-but soundless depths, while rushing torrents and ribbon-like cascades



MILFORD SOUND.



glint over crag and boulder, and, catching the fickle sunlight in a veil of vapour, gather it into a rainbow arch that touches the transparent and sparkling foam with a flash of colour, only to vanish as suddenly as it appeared.

Here over the mountain's brow where the booming cataract arises, clouds are ever weaving their misty draperies to clothe the grim and towering headlands. Softly and silently they come, and hovering with outspread wings over the bleak and rocky heights, breathe their valediction and pass away.

And into this solemn sanctuary we brought the noise and flurry of an alien world, and in this most solitary of Nature's temples I fear we only drew closer round us our robe of indifference, by no means humbling our hearts with the awe and reverence such scenes should evoke, though the lack of enthusiasm might have some excuse in the plea of our being almost sated with sublimity; but the pyrotechnic display, which was the entertainment provided for the night we arrived in Milford, could, I think, only be ascribed to barbarism of the most frivolous description.

No matter how sternly the mountains frowned upon these explosive disturbers of their peace, nor how the placid moon seemed to smile at the presumptuous will-o'-the-wisps that like "vaulting ambition o'erleaped" themselves, and fell dead sticks upon the water; no matter that in that Sound, silent above all others, the spectacle was bizarre and incongruous, the inevitable and too generous programme included fireworks, and so they had to be endured. After all, there was no great injury done, except to good taste, and even that ought to rise superior to remembrance of offences whose motive was kindly, and which are powerless to weaken or destroy the deepest impressions.

In spite of fireworks and fuss, Vandalism and vagary, memory's pictures of Milford, whether in the capricious sunlight, through the haze of rain, or under the still, pale moon, are all of infinite and unspeakable beauty, and can never become vague nor dim.

Where are there more elements brought together, it almost seems for our delight alone, than here?

Not only majestic mountains, stupendous rocks, rushing streams, and wildest torrents, still waters and quiet woods; but dazzling skies and varying clouds are ever perfecting the great designs that have been wrought for our unending enjoyment.

See how the light and shade play on Mitre Peak as the storm breaks for a moment and reveals the strangely conical summit; see the glow of sunset upon the Pembroke Glacier, that mass of frozen snows, like a pall of purity lying over some forgotten burial-place. See how the cataract dashes over the beetling

crags, now drawing closer, then widening as the flood fills its sources. Watch how it shoots and spreads as it falls into the vexed and turbulent abyss, while on its glistening spray the sun, that has for one moment torn himself free from the enshrouding clouds, calls up an answering gleam, and each tiny drop of sheeny foam is glorified into one mighty prism, bright as a gem but transient as a dream; for, as you gaze, it has faded, and a screen of rain, hiding the sun, has taken the light from mountain and bush, and o'ershadowed the wide landscape with a sombre covering of grey.

. . . . .

What a solitary place wherein to live! It is evident, however, that its loneliness does not disconcert a few dwellers, for wild and weird as they are, the shores of Milford Sound have some inhabitants, who for years have occupied two tiny corrugated-iron shantics, a settlement which rejoices in the imposing sobriquet of "Milford City." One of these is the pioneer Sutherland, who discovered the waterfall (said to be the highest in the world) which is called by his name.

During the visits of the *Tarawera* it is usual for a party of the passengers to make a pilgrimage to these falls, a toilsome march that I am told is well

rewarded; though in this case the arrangement had to be abandoned, for the heavy rains had swollen the creeks, and rendered the track impassable. Instead of making the excursion, some of the good-natured spirits on the steamer spent the afternoon of Saturday in preparing a series of tableaux for the evening entertainment.

I find rehearsals of amateur theatricals are always much more amusing than the serious business which results, and these efforts proved no exception, for the characteristics of the would-be performers were so diversified, and showed forth so strongly, that they were most interesting to the irresponsible onlooker.

Here was the ambitious man who indignantly resented the suggestion of posing as the "Dirty Boy," but who considered himself well suited for the character of Romeo, and to prove his capability, from the dim recesses of the hold entered into impassioned rhapsodies, addressed to an imaginary Juliet upon the upper deck.

The fussy man, ever to the front on these occasions, immediately constituted himself master of the ceremonies, for on sea, as on land, those who desire a quiet life must submit to be controlled by the zeal of officiousness, which is not always combined with intelligence. I think, however, even this obtuse indi-

vidual is preferable to the fussy man, who, ubiquitous and irrepressible, is frequently totally devoid of true humour, and, if on board ship, generally succeeds in making his fellow-passengers wish he had the vessel to himself.

There were, of course, the usual crude and rudimental maidens, who imagined themselves Sarah Bernhardts and Ellen Terrys, and who were most willing to personate every character from that of Lady Macbeth to Cinderella, looking equally unnatural in all; but there were others who seemed designed for their parts whatever they might be.

Our last day in Milford was brilliantly fine, and made known to us another aspect of the already perfect scene, though, to my thinking, the beauty that mystery in some measure withheld, was not increased by the more revealing light of steadfast sunshine. We took the boats up the Arthur River, which flows into the Sound, and soon arrived at a break in the Bush where we found a path.

Our landing-place was infelicitous, for on the opposite bank of the river was a convict station, a blot on the landscape which, it is hoped, will only be temporary. As it was Sunday, the prisoners were not employed on their usual work, cutting a track,

and making a road to the Sutherland Falls; but were all scattered round the Government huts, and looked so formidable a crowd that we were well content to have the river between us. The common rumour was that there were not enough warders kept, and in consequence the road-making was much delayed, the convicts only working when they felt so disposed, which I imagine would not be often.

A short time previous to our visit two of these unhappy men had escaped to the Bush, and made their weary way to Lake Te Anau, where they were captured, after having suffered such privations from cold and hunger in the trackless forest, that they vowed, even were they to obtain freedom at the end, they would not endure the misery of those weeks again.

We remained a few hours in the Bush, following the track which led to Lake Aida. This is not the best way of discovering all the wonders of the forest, for, naturally, much that is beautiful and precious has been destroyed in cutting the path; but it is the easiest, and in a long walk comfort is a very pleasant item.

There is no purposeful effort needed when we wander through a wood, for we are conscious only of the strange yearning that leads us on and on, while we try, all in vain, to reach the Everbeyond.

And now I will take my farewell of Milford, here under the benediction of the whispering trees, for save Nature's own, other memories of this time will soon become vague and insignificant.

How we fared on our voyage back it needs not to tell, and thought, flying on swiftest pinions, shall bear me from the heart of that distant forest to the welcoming shadow of my own roof-tree.

### CHAPTER XII.

# WHERE THE TALL SPIRE POINTS TO THE CLOUDLESS SKY.

"Things are not as they are, but as they are regarded."

Italian Proverb.

Compton, March 9, 1891. Upheavals.—This morning we had an entertainment of a new order, taking the form of an earthquake, but I do not desire to have it repeated; although too slight to be very disconcerting, it was sufficiently pronounced to show that the powers, once so potent here, are still unsleeping.

There are numerous signs that this district was at one time the scene of active volcanic disturbance, Lyttelton harbour itself being simply the basin of an extinct crater. The more violent shocks are now chiefly experienced in the North Island, and much devastation has been wrought there, particularly in the hot-spring region, where the beautiful pink-and-white terraces have been completely destroyed.

How you could so far forget yourself, unerring Mother Nature, is to me a mystery!

Were there no fitter object whereon to wreak your fiery vengeance elsewhere, no "antres vast and deserts idle," nor any vacant spaces lying barren under the ripening sunbeams, meriting neither man's approval nor the benison of God, that, in a wayward mood, you should sweep over this most peerless tract of your dominions, and so absolutely lay it waste, that not a trace is left of your fair handiwork which had hitherto borne the proud title of "Eighth Wonder of the World"?

I must confess, dear Mother, I bear you a grudge, for of your magic freaks I have received as my portion, only earthquakes in my own home, instead of visiting those wondrous pink terraces which have been described in every complete record of memories of Maoriland, and of which, alas! I was not permitted to have even the briefest glimpse.

Customs.—As I cannot speak of that which I have not seen, I must content myself writing about what has become familiar, though not for that reason sharing the fate assigned to it in the time-honoured adage.

Usage has thrown a new light on my entourage,

and while I am not minded to dilate upon individual characteristics, I may still generalize as I have not hitherto had opportunity of doing, upon the social aspect of life in the Colony.

Though it is needless to say that hospitality is one of its salient features, I who have experienced its cordiality, cannot pass it over without remark, for it appears to me to be almost a ruling passion here. It would be a cause for regret if through the innovation of formality, this trait should ever grow less pronounced.

At one time it was not essential for a traveller to take thought what he should eat and drink, or where he should be housed, credentials being sufficient to ensure him a kindly reception. The increase in the number of hotels and accommodation houses has rendered this more private form of entertainment, as a general rule, unnecessary, though it has not diminished the hospitality.

In the towns there is much intercourse, music especially being the bond of sympathy which draws people together. Christchurch, though only a city of forty-two thousand inhabitants, boasts two musical societies, both being well patronized, and giving excellent performances.

In a climate which has few drawbacks, open-air festivities of all kinds can be enjoyed; picnics which

occupy the whole day are very popular, when all kinds of repasts are provided, though dinner is not so frequent as luncheon and tea. To these gatherings the young men and maidens, who are occasionally very energetic, think nothing of walking eight or ten miles, though they are not so fond of that exercise for its own sake as the English youth. In this I entirely agree with them, and heartily endorse the paradoxical statement that "there's nothing on earth more disagreeable than a nice long walk!"

Tennis is still the game most in vogue here, though there are rumours of golf superseding it in favour. If such be the case, doubtless the old game, which has been played for generations in Scotland, will be popular to the exclusion of every other, for it is not usual in the Colony to do anything by halves, and the golf bacillus, which has so suddenly attacked English enthusiasts, will surely make itself at home here.

In imagination I can see the eager victims, armed with the weapons of their mimic warfare, tramping over hill and dale, under a weight that in different circumstances would be intolerable; and others, followed by their faithful "caddies," bent on their favourite amusement, with a solemnity worthy of some noble cause. This may be in the time to come, but at present we happily—

"Urge the bounding sphere Over the meshy bar,"

while cries of "Love," "Deuce," "Game," and "Set" are still familiar sounds on sunny lawns.

My garden.—Sometimes I think there could not be a fairer scene than our beautiful lawn, which is always a joy to me. When I stand at the little wicket-gate and look away over the smooth, green space on an autumn morning before the dew has disappeared, and when there is unbroken stillness around, I find it is so satisfying a sight, and in the warm summer afternoons when the pine-trees are giving out their odours, then it is a place wherein to dream—

"The bees come there for honey,
The birds come there to sing,
And we come there with little care
For work or anything."

And often it is bright with pretty girls, and lookerson, all in gay attire.

Although there is ample room for six courts, we find three well separated, with a large space for croquet, accommodation enough, and when we had a band for one of my parties, and lancers and quadrilles were danced, it became a very lively scene.

As I walk about the garden, I am always discover-

ing something new and delightful; now it will be a curious flower that is not an immigrant, now a tree or shrub that has been hiding surely, or has till now escaped my eye. Many of these lovely, drooping, twining things that were strange to me once, are now familiar and dear.

In various parts of the grounds there are evidences of the unequivocally zoological tastes of the small person who arranges everything here, parents included, to suit her own sweet, wayward will.

Creatures on all sides, wingless, tailless, and finny, from shoals of trout in the creek, to the Tasmanian bear (wombat) in the pig-sty—this latter a source of much merriment to visitors, whom he always welcomes with a snort.

Gwlad has quite a regiment of cats, numbering eight, including a family certainly the most hideous of their race, which she gleefully rescued from starvation. For each of the cats, and the three dogs, she has a separate call, and with obedience and delight they all follow her in her wanderings about the garden. Then there is the wallaby, a gift from Hobart, kiwis and seagulls, and, in the lower paddocks, horses and cows, and "Fusty," the lame pony, who there leads a very blissful existence.

Sometimes Gwlad's devotion has tragic experiences, and though she is such a joyous soul, she is at times

pessimistic, and in her childish way rather "down on her luck." When one of her animals comes to grief, generally her moan is: "It would have lived if I hadn't loved it so!" And yet she is ever willing to give up her own pleasures so that she may minister to the comfort of her numerous pets.

One day recently she came hurrying to me with her dear face all blurred with tears, for her precious Paradise ducks \* had discovered that their wings we had clipped were now strong enough for flight, and her voice, broken by sobs, ended the pitiful history with: "Oh, mother, mother, they looked so beautiful and free as they flew away into the sky, I shall never—never want them back with—me—any—more!"

Compton, March 29. "Order gave each thing view."
—We are revelling in the sweet autumn weather, and find it far the most delightful season here, for the turbulent nor'-westers have blown themselves to sleep, and the calm that has succeeded is unruffled and supreme. I count myself singularly lucky to have spent two summers of my life without the alarm I so often experience during that season at home from thunderstorms. Here, on the plains, they are so rare and mild, they have no terrors. In the mountains it

\* Maori, Putangi tangi.

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is far otherwise, and B. tells me that some of the finest he has ever seen have been on the West Coast.

Though I knew only the fairest and most peaceful side of that lovely land, I can picture how it would be in storm, when amid the wild crags and torn clefts—

"You can hear the quick heart Of the tempest beat."

I find socially there are oft-recurring hurricanes and upheavals, for the smallest provocation is a pretext for a holiday throughout the Colony; even the Prince of Wales's birthday is no deterrent to the extremest democrat when on pleasure bent. As a rule the working-class does not misuse its privileges, for I remember hearing that on New Year's Day, when fifteen thousand people went into Lyttelton for the regatta, there was not one conviction for drunkenness.

Speaking of Lyttelton reminds me of steamers, and of the very utilitarian cablegram which is always sent from England on their arrival from this or any other port of New Zealand:

"Frozen meat in good condition."

Not a word is added about the passengers, whose welfare is tacitly understood to be a secondary respon sibility, which appears to me rather ignominious for the lords of creation. It is only necessary to travel on a vessel that carries frozen mutton to find how little real

importance human beings are, compared with that of the freight which yields such an unfailing revenue.

The vagabond phase of our lives has been in abeyance for a time—how long this will last I know not—and we have had opportunity for the study of the amenities of civilization as practised here.

Amongst other things, I have been greatly interested in the museum of Christchurch, a substantial building, charmingly situated, which contains the finest collection in the southern hemisphere; the reason being that the bones of the Moa,\* a gigantic bird now extinct, have been largely found upon the Canterbury plains, and thus the Museum authorities have been enabled to make valuable exchanges with European and other antiquarian societies. In the great hall are several of these skeletons set up, side by side with those of ostriches, which do not show to advantage when compared with the finer proportions of the New Zealand bird.

Christchurch is indeed fortunate in possessing so courteous and intellectual a director as Mr. Henry Forbes, whose profound research and great natural insight are almost better appreciated in scientific circles at home than in the colonies. It is an education to have him for guide amongst the many interesting objects with which the museum is filled.

<sup>\*</sup> Dinornis elephantopus.

The variety of birds especially delighted me, although here of course it was nothing but their plumage, for the spirit was away, perchance haunting the woods their song once made melodious. The Tui, with his little white-feathered throat, only looked what he is popularly called, the parson-bird, and scarcely akin to the solitary singer whose natural surroundings convey no hint of the taxidermist's art.

Here was also a very perfect Maori house, built of wood, ornamented with wonderfully hideous, ancient carvings of gods, and filled with native weapons, mats, and other curiosities, all significant of a period of industry unfortunately become unnecessary since the invaders are able to minister to the now-unpicturesquely civilized needs of the conquered race.

About half a mile from us, and down beside the river Heathcote, which also flows past Compton, lies the Opawa Trout Farm, a most interesting feature in the place. Here, in a prettily wooded garden, trout can be seen in every state of its existence, from the ova in the aquaria under cover, to the full-grown fish of twelve or thirteen pounds. The small ponds where they are kept are on different levels, and running water is constantly passing through them. The Acclimatization Society of New Zealand stock many rivers with fish from this farm.

Compton, April. Gaieties.—H.M.S. Curaçoa is stationed at Lyttelton for a month or two, and as her officers are exceedingly gregarious, there has been a good deal of entertaining in various ways, and many dances. Amongst the festivities a ball given by the Girls' Boating Club was so well arranged, I must describe it. The walls of the rooms, where it was held, were appropriately decorated with flags, oars, and canoes, and everything that would suggest the river pastime. The twenty hostesses were bewitchingly dressed in white, with their colours in the form of red ribbon scarves, tied Scotch fashion about the waist and shoulders. All wore powdered hair and patches, and were extremely pretty-looking, especially so when, standing in rows at each side of the door, they bowed a simultaneous welcome to their guests.

During the evening sixteen of them went through a set of lancers together, which was novel, but was it not also prophetic? The days have passed in New Zealand when a girl had to share a waltz between two or three partners, for now women are in the majority here as elsewhere. There is, unhappily, a growing tendency on the part of the men to spare themselves all exertion, and, instead of doing what is supposed to be their duty on the field of frivolity, to lounge about the doorways and gossip; so that if maidens of the future desire to dance, I much fear it will have to be with each other.

There was a very pleasant party given on the Curaçoa. The cruiser's deck, made gay with flags, and lighted with electricity, was converted into a charming ballroom, and the guests were conveyed by special train to Lyttelton, and arrived close to the ship, where they were most hospitably welcomed by Captain Stopford and his officers. Needless to record, under such auspices, the music and floor were all that could be desired, the only drawback to the delightful evening was that we found it all too short, for, like Cinderella, we had to return at the stroke of twelve, trains, even if special, waiting for no man.

Fackson's. West Coast Road, April 13. "The best-laid schemes o' mice and men, Gang aft a-gley."—As I imagined, the home-keeping mood did not last, and so we find ourselves here, and, alas! against our will, compelled by stress of weather, and the impetuosity of uncontrollable rivers, to wait quite at the other side of where we wish to be, until it shall please their fury to abate and allow us to pass over.

B. having invited Captain Greenstreet of the Rimutaka to accompany us to the West Coast, we started on Friday, and three young girl-friends joined us at Springfield, where we hired

a coach and drove over here. A merry party, for the trio and Gwlad find fun in every circumstance, and their enthusiasm is not even damped by torrents of rain.

Arriving here on Saturday, we intended to leave to-day (Monday), but the rivers are "up," and to attempt to cross them would be both dangerous and nopeless. Naturally I am anxious to return, as I have invited a hundred guests to a dance on Thursday evening, and now I see it will not be possible to reach home before Wednesday, and probably not even then, unless these wild torrents have subsided.

How glad I was to see the Otira Gorge again, and to find that my first impression of awed delight in its grandeur was only intensified by more familiarity!

Compton, April 18. "As good luck would have it."— The Fates were kind, and the rivers went down, so that we were able to cross them on Tuesday, but, having had a merry time at Jackson's, we should not have been so anxious to leave save for necessity.

How imperturbably, and always hopefully, we trudged on through the deluges! for was not there ever the feeling that they might clear away?

To participate in the glory that followed, no discomfort would have been deemed too great: when through the tangled masses of the forest the fickle sunlight glinted, and with his golden arrows struck the babbling creeks, and lush-green mosses, rain-soaked ferns, and drooping lichens, and overhead the Tui poured forth his gladsome song, then the Bush was transfigured, and beautiful beyond compare.

To think that even into so lovely a spot the demon of misrule should enter! How else can I designate the spirit that animates the miner, who suffers no neighbourhood to be free from fear of his destructive calling?

In the Bush near Jackson's is a building containing quartz-crushing machinery, the gold-bearing mineral being supplied from a mine perched on the top of a hill four thousand feet high, whence it is conveyed down to the mill in an aërial tram. In erecting this plant there has been much havoc wrought, which the best efforts of time can never wholly renew; but as it is the apparatus for a legitimate form of mining, no protest can do any good.

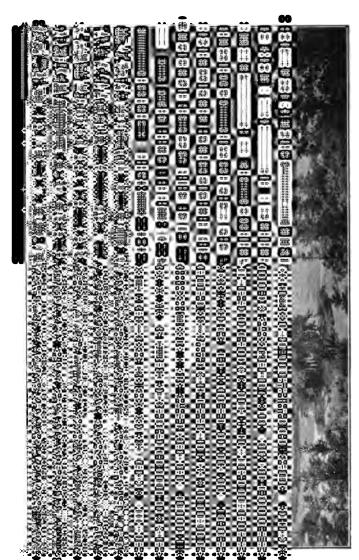
We commenced our return journey in brilliant sunshine and excellent spirits, trusting to our good fortune, and anticipating neither let nor hindrance, as we bowled along the beautiful road, below which surged and swirled the brown water of the Teremakau. So violent was the current that we were congratulating ourselves we had not to cross it, when suddenly we were accosted by a rider, who threw at us the following cheer as he hurried on: "You'll not get far!" As he did not stop to explain his somewhat ambiguous remark, we felt at once cast down, and continued our way in a subdued mood, apprehensive that we should come by-and-by upon an effectual barrier to our progress.

We were not left long in suspense, for, after driving for a mile or two, we saw ahead, lying right across our road, a huge boulder, which, in falling, had brought down an immense tree-root. Thus was the ill-omened prediction realized in a most tantalizing way, for how were we to surmount such obstacles?

Fortunately at this moment a road-man came up with some implements, and he, Captain Greenstreet, B., and our driver set to work, and with the aid of crowbars and picks had made room for the coach to pass in far less time than we could have believed possible.

This was not our only excitement, for after driving eight or ten miles we came to Kelly's Creek, near which there had been a heavy landslip. This had been discovered by the Midland Railway surveyors, whose camp was close by, and who, knowing we had to go on, had employed a gang of their own men, working from eight a.m. until two, when we arrived, to make the road clear for us. As it was, the horses





THE MINGHA RIVER.

had to be unharnessed and the coach dragged across, the clearing being too narrow to drive over.

The North Branch of the Bealey river has been renamed, and is now called after me, to which I should have objected had there not been a decidedly Maori ring about my name—"Mingha."

Along the route next day our reassuring Jehu, by way of keeping up our spirits when we came to any impossible-looking fords, repeatedly remarked: "This is nothing to what we'll have to go through at the Bealey;" and his prophecy proved correct, for the current at its seventh and last crossing was truly appalling. Incidents and minute catastrophes are so common to travellers in New Zealand that without them driving would lose half its zest.

What a merry time we had! Notwithstanding rain, swollen creeks, fallen trees, and landslips, our little party did not stint itself of fun. The birds sang for us, and we sang for each other all the songs and duets we could recall, and we even went so far as to parody some of our favourites to make them appropriate; and our attempt on the Eton Boy's boat-song I mean to keep in memory of those gleeful hours together—

Jolly coaching weather,
And a strong autumn breeze,
Strain on the leather,
All the favourite gees;

And drive, drive together, Two hes and five merry shes.

Trotting through the passes
Where the river leads,
Through the tussock grasses
Where the weka feeds;
While we sang like lads and lassies
To encourage the weary steeds.

Davis may be as clever,
Others may make more row,
But Cassidy's driving can never
Be beaten, we must allow;
And our thoughts will linger ever
On the memories we gather now.

Don't we remember the places
Where the slips in our coach road lay,
And the horses unloosed from the traces
Before we got through that day;
And Reinhold and Company's faces
As they cheered ere we went our way!

In the years to come, fine weather
May tempt us again to roam,
No more may we all be together
On this side the broad sea's foam,
But forgotten our tour will be never
In our far-away English home.

It was pleasant to arrive here and find that Miss Mein had arranged everything for the dance, having had the house prettily decorated with ships' flags and evergreens; and Gwlad has frequently assured me that her party was a perfect success, and that she would not object to having a dance at home every week.

Compton, August 16. There are little feet that drag! and little feet that dance!—What a long time it is since I wrote anything here! I fear it must be that the ordinary humdrum existence of the winter months near Christchurch does not offer enough attraction for detailing. This season has been the coldest we have spent since our arrival, and, oddly enough, it has followed an unusually severe one in Europe.

We are naturally thrown much on our own resources, for open-air entertainments are out of the question. There are no picture-galleries, few concerts, and good companies at the theatre are very rare.

This pleasure-loving community, in planning its own amusements, does not forget those who are less favoured, and there are many philanthropic movements in which it is occupied and interested.

At the house of a friend, twenty of us have met for some time once a week, for the purpose of working for the Kilburn Orphanage at home. We divided into committees, each one in turn providing entertainment; readings, recitations, music, acting, and the like, helping to relieve the monotony of the work. We had a charming diversion last week, planned and carried out by Mrs. Humphreys. A children's fancy ball, held in the Tuum Street Hall, to which invitations were for the sensible hour of four. Mrs. Humphrey's considerate idea was, that in the dull season an undertaking of this kind would give an impetus to the trade of the smaller shops, and to the dressmakers who were willing to follow other fashions than their own, and that planning and designing suitable costumes would, for a time, pleasantly occupy the little ones.

The result was most successful, and some of the impersonations equalled anything I have ever seen, notably Britannia in white and gold, with trident, shield, and helmet, who headed the march of the two hundred and fifty children round the hall. "Robinson Crusoe" and his man "Friday" were exquisitely carried out by two small girls; and "A friend from Donnybrook," aged four, with his red hair and shillelah, was indeed a typical Home Ruler in miniature.

Dancing was preceded by a play, *The Sleeping Beauty*, in which Gwlad took the part of "Queen;" and for once our little Home Ruler experienced the joy of absolute sovereignty induced by yards of scarlet velvet and a tinsel crown!

She is quite satisfied for the moment that she has

discovered her calling. It amused me to note the absence of stage fright; her lack of self-consciousness left her mind free, and all her heart was in the play, which she, as well as the others, acted extremely well. I tell her we have different ideas for her future, and what, I ask, is to become of the pleasure she has planned from working with pencil and brush, if the drama is going to absorb her? She has more than a child's enthusiasm in everything which interests her, and certain it is that her condition of mind for the present is unalloyed and perfect rapture, for last night she again appeared in a charming play, Creatures of Impulse, organized by Mrs. Alan Scott, who acted the part of heroine in a very bright and dramatic way, which was most taking and delightful.

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## "A BRIGHT LAND THAT LAUGHS TO THE BRIGHT SEA BELOW."

"I have a fanciful fancy, and it pleases me too well for me to put it aside, because it is unprovable that we all get a better look, less troubled, apprehensive, masked, when we are content to try and look quietly face to face with Nature. It seems to me that I get more like what I feel, and less like what I am, at such times. For after looking, with all the heart's love and reverence at Nature, there rises, with the calmness, a strange bright sense of expectation, almost as though something might emerge, and come towards us with recognition and with answering love."—CLIFFORD HARRISON.

Compton, September 6, 1891. A pleasant project.— To-day I seem to understand something of the joy the birds must feel when they—

"Hover about ere making wing For a land of lovelier growth."

Only I imagine my delight differs from theirs, as I deserve the welcome change of place and scene, because I have perseveringly been picking up the crumbs of contentment, trying to sing as if it were

summer, while they, with no stern duties, home ties, nor hindrances caused by "the mania for possessing things," have been freely and happily disporting themselves in some sweet, far-off Elsewhere.

The prospect of travel always clates me, but, while envying their strong powers of flight, which so illimitably outstrip our means of locomotion, I am content with the best alternative possible to a wingless humanity, and am delighted with the plan we have arranged.

Our idea is a tour round the north of this island to Nelson, from there to Greymouth, and then to return home across the ranges by the road we already know. Happily B. will be able to make the expedition with us, thus our enjoyment will be complete. I must leave all description until we have reached Nelson, where we are to spend a week, for a journal is an encumbrance to the mind during days of travel; there must be rest and quiet for writing faithful records of the charming experiences we have proposed for ourselves.

Warwick House, Nelson, September. "Coaching days and coaching ways." — Now that we have arrived here, and have been gladdened by a vision of brilliant skies and dazzling sunlight, shining upon one of the prettiest little towns we have ever seen,

I feel inclined to be thoroughly idle, and enjoy it all dreaming the afternoon away amongst the Banksia roses on the veranda. But as this indolent mood is only the reaction from last week's long drive, I must conquer it. I can foresee numerous distractions from writing here, but will at least make an attempt.

Last Monday we left Compton at an untimely hour in the morning, and started for our driving-tour which commenced in the train; though it did not, like most of the expeditions in Mark Twain's celebrated "Tramp," end there.

For an entirely exhausting occupation I know none to equal the sixty miles' journey from Christchurch to Culverden, which takes, summer and winter, of everybody's time, five mortal hours, and I found it only an aggravation to a natural impatience to remember that at home it could be comfortably accomplished in one.

I have discovered it is unwise, and not gratifying to the listener, to remark upon the slow train service in this country; usually the reply is that we ought to have been here before the railways, to appreciate the great change for the better. While endorsing the first part of this statement, I always make a mental reservation upon the second. I cannot see where the improvement is found. In my humble opinion coaching is greatly preferable to the

crawling of a parliamentary train, whose passengers are boxed up in a carriage from which air and freedom are alike excluded, and where the scenery is enjoyed only "through a glass, darkly."

The railroad to Culverden leads north over the Canterbury plains into the Hurunui country, which might correctly be called the Warren, for over the whole district, and for miles up the East Coast, rabbits abound in countless myriads, in every phase of liveliness, and also, I regret to say, in every stage of decomposition, which was to me sufficient ocular demonstration to prove that, as three of these little smugglers consume the food of one sheep, runholding in New Zealand cannot always be a lucrative undertaking.

At Culverden the line terminates, for which I was profoundly thankful, and as we had still fifteen miles to go before reaching Waiau in the Amuri country, our destination for the night, we took the coach and soon covered the distance. The landscape was flat and monotonous, but the weather was perfect, and, be the scenery interesting or otherwise, there is always a certain amount of pleasure on the box of a coach.

At seven on Tuesday morning we started again for a drive of fifty-two miles to Kaikoura, on the coast. We began by repeatedly crossing over river beds, which produces a curious sensation something like that of a series of second-class earthquakes, but of no account when custom has made them familiar.

Our way led through a dreary tract with tussockcovered hills, amongst which a deep gully bears the forbidding name of Hell's Gate; then we came to a long stretch of black birch Bush, while above peeped the snow-besprinkled mountains. The sun glowed in a fair, blue sky, and from every leaf and twig radiated the glories of a perfect spring morning, the only shadow cast upon the scene being from those parts of the woods through which a fire had run, leaving many trunks bleak and bare. About midday we arrived at a beautiful property called Green Hills, fourteen hundred feet above sea-level, where we had luncheon, my first repast in a New Zealand station. We inspected the wool-shed, but too hurriedly to give me any idea of the various processes, which I hope to understand before leaving the Colony; and I shall have opportunity for this, if we accept any of the numerous invitations we have received from hospitable friends who have sheep-runs here.

On we drove, down the most zigzag of roads, until again we reached level country.

Given a lovely day, light hearts, glorious scenery, and the spirit to enjoy, what more can be asked from the Inflexible Three who are said to weave our destinies? They, cruel jades, rarely grant so many

favours together, but as the years go on, the deeper nature in us that defies them gives us a keener sense of the necessity of being grateful for the brief delights of life, which, if they be few, are none the less precious.

At length from afar we descried the dim, grey sea, and this sight is always to me an inspiration, however far distant. To reach it our way led through more cultivated country, and we felt we had left the wilds, at least for a time. As we passed the various interesting objects on the road, our driver, being of a communicative order, drew our attention to them, and pointed out three blue gums (eucalyptus) standing alone on the top of an eminence, and informed us that these trees were planted with much ceremony to commemorate the introduction of the first rabbits into the district. He went on to tell us that a monument was proposed to be erected near this place on the extermination of the last of these troublesome little creatures. Judging from the numbers disporting themselves on every side during our drive through their midst, a column of pure gold might be safely promised, so little likely is it ever to be required.

How much, for ages long, has been painted, sung, and written on that unfailing subject, the beauty and grandeur of the Alps! Pages of description in all books of Swiss travel; prose, poem, and picture, have each depicted these noble ranges in every aspect with which it has pleased Nature to invest them, and no guise they assume that has not been set forth and portrayed by both the skilled and the unskilled.

What, then, is left to say of the glorious ranges of a new world, save the familiar words that were meted out to other scenes long ere these sublime heights of the Southern Seas had been discovered? And yet the snow-crowned Kaikouras seem to merit more than feeble description and much-quoted simile; for, in their grand aloofness, they are absolute monarchs. They have likewise all the attributes which go to make the Alps so ineffably wonderful, nobility of form and spectral purity, while to these is added that for which the Alps must yield the palm to this white Brotherhood of another hemisphere—at their feet roll the tides of a lonely sea!

Alas! from the base of these everlasting snow peaks rise also the murmurs of a temporary little town (may its confines never increase!), at present rejoicing in three hotels, a post-office, masonic hall, and a draper's shop, a place of about the last possibility of dulness wherein to spend a day. This we were compelled to do, as the running of the coaches did not fit in well, the next one only starting on

Thursday morning; so from Tuesday evening, when we arrived, we had ample time to study the diminutive seaport of Kaikoura, whose vacancy would require an apostle of the greatness of small things, to do it justice.

The sea was too rough to make boating desirable, and we were to have driving galore ere the tour was ended, therefore there was nothing to do but, as B. said, "read, loaf, and sleep" till Thursday, when soon after dawn we saw—

"Kneeling, like hooded friars, the misty mountains Receive the benediction of the sun,"

and when we were ready to start, they doffed their covering of cloud entirely, and stood grandly "taking the morning."

Out of the very ocean itself they seemed to emerge, for the pale grey haze at their feet hid the foreground, and gave even greater height to their majestic eminence.

The crispness of an unused day was in the air as we began our forty miles' drive through fresh and varied scenes to Kekerangu, our next resting-place.

A short distance from Kaikoura lies a Maori pah (village) called Maunga Mauna, a miserable collection of dilapidated-looking huts, or "whares," as the natives name them; but the settlement seemed by no means adequate to contain the very numerous

inhabitants who turned out to watch us pass—the advent of the weekly coach being, no doubt, a great excitement in their eventless lives.

It seems odd to mention a gathering of Maoris in their own country, as though it were something unusual; but, as a matter of fact, the aborigines are not frequently met in this island, and are very much scattered, so that a Maori in the streets of Christchurch is noticed just as an Indian, or one of another race, at home.

For many miles after leaving Maunga Mauna we skirted the beach, and the views were wild and grand; on our left, on the mountains and down to the road, forests of Ngaio \* trees, hardy and strong; to our right, mile after mile of storm-swept rock and reef; and beyond, the blue, illimitable sea. It was all indescribably beautiful, and, like much of this scenery—not the least of its attractions for me—very solitary.

After a long stretch of the coast-line the change of surroundings is abrupt in the extreme. Surely we must have been transported to a Sahara, for our horses now floundered and blundered through miles of sand, on which they had to imagine a road, and the wheels seemed to sink deeper at every turn. B. and Gwlad walked through this yellow waste, but I think their anxiety to spare the horses made them

<sup>\*</sup> Myoporum Læetum.

very sorry for themselves; Wellington boots alone would have been any use in such a place. At intervals were cabbage trees, Toi toi grass, and flax, which accentuated the very unfamiliar-looking nature of the beach.

What curious individuals coach-drivers generally are, and how humorous are often their relations of redoubtable performances, where the historian invariably figures as hero! Occasionally these savour "un peu de Tarascon," but possibly a mirage may affect their minds as it did the immortal Tartarin.

They always dilate, too, so much on the adroit way they keep the horses together and never over-drive; but I think that *rara avis*, a coach-driver who would acknowledge that any one else could hold the reins skilfully, has never been discovered.

We had luncheon at an accommodation house on the Clarence River, and then resumed the road, seeing little worthy of description, and feeling very thankful when, towards evening, tired and sleepy, we reached Kekerangu, and found clean and comfortable quarters in a place where we had been assured they would be very much the reverse.

When I think of the very early starts we made during this journey, I am constrained to wonder if I am the same individual who usually finds eight o'clock soon enough to leave a cosy couch. Possibly the hardness of the beds in most of these out-of-the-way places is sufficient reason; generally half-past five was the hour we were wakened, and this seems to me the best time in all the day. I am not quoting from the tradition of the self-asserting sparrow which makes its solitary meal of the ever-unsuspecting worm, for even in my callow youth I developed a profound contempt, which I have not lost, for the "carly bird," whose matutinal enterprises I could ascribe always to greed, and never to that love of duty which is so constantly iterated into young and credulous ears.

What we lose by lying with closed eyes behind drawn blinds! what we gain when we resist the desire for "a little more slumber"!

Out there beyond our dreaming ken is enacting a revelation of sun and sky with every varied dawn; while we are weaving a web of fantastic fancy in the glamour of our sleep, the fresh marvels that come with every change of cloud, and every appearing and passing away of the early mists, are all unseen; and, notwithstanding the exhilaration of a new-born day in the air, and the light of Fairyland upon each leaf and blade, unheeded are the pageants of the firmament unrolled, and with scant reverence do we ever recall that with each majestic step the sun paces

up to our horizon, he scatters largesse through the universe, and the splendours of his beams into the profoundest glooms of the morning.

But while indifference or happiness may close our eyes to all this, Sorrow keeps them open as she sits at our side, and with her whip of scorpions drives us to the glimmering square, where, "in dark summer dawns," we behold the earth's unveiling.

But I am moralizing, for which there was no time at Kekerangu.

We had to start at a tragically early hour, in order to cover our fifty-four miles by five in the evening, or the Blenheim folk would have had their letters late.

Our good weather deserted us, and the scenery was disappointing, so these drawbacks, combined with an uncomfortable coach with four horses, made the drive tame and monotonous. Much of the land through which we passed was used entirely for sheep-runs, and I am afraid I have now become so utterly weary of the eternal, little woolsack, for he is such a stupid beast, either taken individually or in a "mob," that it seems to me a subject for regret that so many men of culture and intelligence should have to devote their lives to the raising and management of that most aimless of animals, though I know it is absolute treason to propound these views to a squatter.

Thirty miles of our drive was now through the

Flaxbourne estate belonging to the Clifford family, and consisting of a series of tussock-covered hills bounded by the sea, doubtless charming in fine weather. Here the rabbits are numerous enough to necessitate the employment of a hundred men, whose time is occupied trapping, poisoning, shooting, and, by other means, trying to keep down these greedy little thieves There are fifty miles of rabbit-fencing on this property which will, doubtless, in time prove beneficial; but it does not appear to have had much effect so far, for still there are such swarms that it sometimes seemed to us as though the hillsides were moving, the most common being the dark, silvery-blue species.

After nearly two years of drought, the poor sheep, of which there are many thousands on the run, looked starved, the amount of good grass left to them by the rapacity of their voracious little enemies being indeed a limited supply. There is nothing so wearying to the sight as the interminable tussock tufts, and the only relief was at the Awatere River, where there were plains covered with beautiful English grass, refreshing to the eyes as an oasis in the desert.

While changing our teams, some of the horses always "played up," and this afforded us no small amusement, for we were never quite sure to what pass their high spirits would bring them. One

of the leaders from the fresh team at Flaxbourne reared, broke the traces, and generally misconducted himself, which the driver assured us was "only his play," and that he would be all right when we were off, which proved to be the case.

At last we sighted the Blenheim plains, and knew we had not far to go. The little town is situated very much like Christchurch, though surrounded by higher hills; but torrents of rain hid most of the view, so I cannot say I have anything more than a vague impression of Blenheim.

On Saturday we were up betimes, and started at seven. Although this was our longest drive—seventy-eight miles—it really seemed the shortest; it was full of incident. The coach was comfortable, and the horses, of which there were five changes during the day, in splendid condition, and Newman, the driver in charge, one of the best in New Zealand. As events happened, it was well for us we were so fortunate; the difficulties might have been insurmountable but for his skill, and the patience and perseverance of the teams.

Before the day was over, we had reason to congratulate ourselves upon our good luck, for we had an experience which, though to me entirely novel, was by no means agreeable, going through a river in strong flood being too exciting an adventure to be considered gratifying.

The reins were held by a man decidedly typical—tall and muscular, fair-bearded and bright-eyed, whose self-repressed manner in his work inspired the conviction that plenty of character underlay the calm exterior. Had our dangers been even greater than they were, I believe he would not have indicated by so much as the quiver of an eyelid that we were in peril.

We set out in high spirits, for the weather had improved, and soon after leaving Blenheim came to the Rivers Opawa and Wairau, which, at an ordinary time, would be innocent-looking shingle beds with only meandering streams, now were currents deep and rapid, for there had been much rain, and the melting of the snow on the ranges had brought down a large volume of water.

No one who has not actually seen a river in flood can easily picture it; in a few hours it has become a mad torrent, bearing all before it, though it may be that another change of weather will calm it as quickly.

These two rivers, which lie close together, are peculiarly treacherous—so much so that it is considered necessary to have a signal-post stationed on each bank, upon which is suspended a white flag

when the crossings are safe, and a red one when there is danger.

Our driver stood up and looked at the swollen currents; then, without remark, drove away from the usual ford to a point further up the stream, and plunged his team right into the swirling flood.

The four noble creatures breasted it bravely, though their heads alone were visible.

Then came a wild moment when it seemed as if all hope had gone, for the leaders were swimming, and the coach was lifting and swaying, while we on the box had the water washing over our feet, and the prospect of being engulfed was becoming more and more probable. These age-long minutes, when we "count time by heart-throbs," indeed leave their impress on our minds.

Brave beauties! how fearlessly they fought for our safety as well as for their own! A landing-place at length was reached, but we had drifted far down below the ford. We breathed again, but only for a short space till we were in the other river, the crucial test of our good horses' power, and they faced the second danger without shrinking.

At such moments we feel there is no doubt that life is well worth living.

I must confess I was quite dumb with fear, which was fortunate, as the intense calm, born of apprehen-

sion, may easily pass current for bravery, and after peril is over we object to remembering we had made fools of ourselves.

Close to these two mad rivers is a third, the Onamolutu: but, though swift and deep, it was not too rapid to daunt us. When once more on the road, we encountered a man riding furiously to hang out the red flag to arrest the unwary, as the whirling waters were still rising. The Imperturbable then told us that had the coach not been so heavy he would not have dared to attempt a crossing. Now the danger is past, it would have been a great disappointment to me, for I have come to the conclusion that, though coaches do not make the most desirable ferry-boats, and are more appropriately employed jogging along the Queen's highway, I am glad now to have experienced an entirely new sensation of jeopardy, which I could not have even faintly realized by the most graphic description.

We had compensation in a glorious day spent partly in going through the Kaituna valley to Havelock, the pretty little township on the Pelorus Sound. Along the road we met various pedestrians, who asked our driver the rather obscure question: "How is she?"

They meant, of course, the river, a fruitful source of solicitude in the district. "Oh, she's a bit thick,"

was his laconic reply, which amused me greatly, though it was just the careless sort of speech that would occur to his mind.

That this seeming indifference was not his real feeling, I gathered from his answer to another driver, who asked if he thought he might venture across: "Oh yes, if you want to be twenty miles down stream in half an hour"!

Another thing that struck us as being rather droll was the way which at intervals, on arriving at each little settlement, he threw out an addressed newspaper, first at one gate, then another at the next, until he had exhausted the large pile he had brought on the coach. The people for whom they were intended must have been of the usual, happy-go-lucky type of dwellers here, for assuredly the denizens of the old country would rebel if their daily news reached them in the unacceptable condition of this damp literature, for not only were the newspapers soaked by the river, but, when thrown out, they sometimes lighted on a shrub, occasionally on the road, but much more frequently in a ditch. Doubtless these pioneer settlers in the wilds are glad enough to receive their mental pabulum in whatever state it may be administered, so I conclude point of view is everything.

For miles we followed the course of the Pelorus

River, a wide and smoothly flowing stream, whose banks are exquisitely wooded, until it brought us at midday to Canvas Town, where we had luncheon. This is a small collection of wooden houses formerly the encampment of gold-miners, whose tents had given a name to the place, and it was from the valley beyond that the celebrated Maungatapo bushrangers escaped, after they had murdered the miners and stolen their gold, though they were afterwards captured by one of the gang turning Queen's evidence. This of course occurred in the old days; New Zealand has settled down into a much less exciting phase of existence, and outrages of this kind are now unknown.

Leaving Canvas Town, we crossed the Rai Saddle through beautifully wooded country, and further on had a few miles' driving that kept us pretty wide awake. We had to ascend from the Whangamoa Valley, eleven hundred feet, to the Saddle, and when over it had to descend six miles, going round very sharp curves, and so zigzag was the road that for a moment the leaders were often lost to sight. Precipices of hundreds of feet lay to our left, and when one of the horses shied the situation was far from agreeable. At a bend we came on a landslip, where the driver remarked, with his usual non-chalance, that he thought he could "just get round"!

but as we were going down at a swinging trot, I could not help feeling there was a decided doubt about it. However, he seemed to know, and we arrived safely at the foot of the Saddle, where lies the Happy Valley—a propitiatory name, I imagine, for the place was sad-looking and desolate.

Afterwards we drove by the sea nine miles along the Wakapuaka Beach into Nelson. The road was good, with lovely sheltered bays and green paddocks, between patches of bush, pretty houses nestling amongst the trees, and a grand view of distant mountain ranges across a blue stretch of sea.

As we neared Nelson, the rain, never far distant since morning, fell in torrents, hiding the beauty of the fair, little town, which the next morning's sunlight showed so clearly. And now that I have brought us thus far in my journal, I will wait for another opportunity to describe our doings here, for I have had enough to-day of what Colley Cibber calls "the great pleasure of writing about one's self."

## CHAPTER XIV.

"HEAVY TO GET, AND LIGHT TO HOLD."

"If we who thus together roam
In a strange land and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of chance,
Yet who would stop, or fear t'advance,
Though home and shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on?"

Warwick House, Nelson, September 17, 1891. "He is well paid that is well satisfied."—We find ourselves in quite an ideal town, if such a thing be possible upon this materialistic sphere; the graces of civilization around Nelson have not interfered with the comeliness of Nature sufficiently to sadden the beholder, nor to injure the sense that is dependent on beauty for its very being.

On many other sites where men have collected together, it would seem as if expedience had been of more moment than mere picturesqueness, so native trees have been burnt, manufactories and chimneys set up, and what were originally calm and sylvan

scenes, have inevitably become the most commonplace townships.

This removal of ancient landmarks the world is pleased to call enterprise, and the pitiless spirit that affects it, "go ahead!" Sad it is that we cannot build up without first tearing down, and that, in eagerness to realize ephemeral projects, we should be so ready to destroy.

These so-called strained and old-fashioned theories are usually met with scorn, while a protest, uttered against wholesale destruction, is frequently answered by the very much hackneyed saying, "Man must live, and to live must settle the country." If the premise be conceded so must the conclusion; but I always feel inclined to reply in the words of the French judge, "Je ne vois pas la necessité!" At all events, why must man live here if his doing so means the ruin of the Bush, and the transformation of one of the world's wonderlands into a mere iron-roofed campingground for the accommodation of the surplus population of Great Britain?

But I vex myself unnecessarily; this can never be save in a few accessible places, for dear old Dame Nature will not allow it in many of her vaster retreats, and to defend herself from the selfish inroads of the too grasping settler, she has raised effectual barriers against his utilitarian ardour, and made this land, for

the most part, like the wilder districts of Scotland, about which a fervent patriot, as the unanswerable climax to an argument with an Englishman on the relative areas of their respective countries, triumphantly exclaimed: "Why, man, when the Lord was makin' Scotland, He had sae muckle grund He had just to throw it up in heaps!"

Unfortunately for settlement, but happily for other reasons, the "heaps" in New Zealand are chiefly composed of slate, covered with a mere sprinkling of earth, which does not offer a kindly pasturage for the insatiable woolly tribe, though upon them there is ample foothold for glorious forests, and spaces, too, where rest eternal snows in undisturbed and perpetual silence.

Meanwhile, I have been diverted far from my description of this picturesque little city.

Here the utmost peace prevails; no whirr of wheel nor clang of hammer breaks the tranquil calm that seems to possess the place. Within its precincts life goes on in an even tenor with which the residents appear well content, and it is so happy an Arcadia that when first the proposition was mooted that the Midland Railway should be brought to Nelson, one of its inhabitants ruefully exclaimed: "Then if that happens, at night we shall be forced to shut our doors!"

The city itself is rather flat, being situated on a small plain fronting the sea, but girt about on the other three sides by high hills, to which the suburbs are gradually creeping; quaintly built houses nestle among the fair, spring greenery in a very peculiar fashion. On an elevation in the centre of the town stands the cathedral, a fine wooden edifice, prettily decorated within, and clustered about with lovely trees.

Outside the harbour, and half across the bay, stretching in a straight line for seven miles, is a curious natural formation called the Boulder Bank, composed of stones, which have been washed up by currents into a sea wall, and this bank makes the harbour opening so narrow that large vessels are prevented from entering the port.

Between bank and shore, when the tide is out, there is a wide stretch of flat mud which the sunset rays seem to transform into a molten lake, glowing with fire.

There are some very good buildings in and around the town, notably the Girls' and Boys' Colleges, the Hospital, and the Lunatic Asylum. At one time hop-growing was an industry of the district, but it never became permanent as in Kent. The River Maitai flows through a part of the town, overhung with weeping willows, which grow well, and become fine trees in this country.

To-day we have been to the Cemetery, one of the loveliest spots imaginable, about two miles distant, on the Wakapuaka road, standing on the slope of a hill close to the sea.

How calm and peaceful it is, full of beautiful trees and flowers, and so little like a graveyard that it only seems as though the tired travellers who lie there were resting in a sunny corner, with the blue sea's ripples crooning their lullaby, but with no rude awakening to rouse them to the dark world's care and trouble for evermore!

Even there the unconscious humorist has been at work, for several of the verses

"Spelt by the unlettered muse"

are as droll as those in some of the old home churchyards; and one of the *memento mori* amused me very much. It was on a modern monument, and ran thus:

"IN MEMORY
OF FIVE LATE
RESIDENTS OF
THE PROVINCE OF
MARLBOROUGH
MURDERED BY A
GANG OF FOUR BUSHRANGERS."...

Evidently the proper division of the word would not

come into the shape of the stone, which was an obelisk. I was reminded of a similar one in England:—

"Honest John 's dead and gone."

I have rather a morbid fancy for collecting epitaphs, and in this grave occupation I am often more diverted than awed.

The perfect stillness of the days here is a delightful sensation, and a decided change from breezy Christ-church. It is almost pleasure enough to sit idly dreaming on the veranda, which the clusters of tiny white Banksia roses turn into a lovely arbour, and where we are fronted by large camellia trees laden with bloom. However, numerous diversions have been planned for us by kind friends, in which picnics and long drives will be the chief entertainments.

Yesterday we had a charming time, combining business with pleasure, for B. wanted to see some Midland Railway work at Belgrove, by train twenty-three miles from Nelson. Arriving there, we drove to the top of Spooners' Range, where we had an al fresco luncheon, and then came down an almost perpendicular hill, which feat could have been accomplished better by rolling, and found ourselves at the mouth of a tunnel in course of boring. We

went a few chains into it, for the most part wading through mud, and saw very little for our pains, except some men picking at the end by the feeble light of candles hung on beams. B., being interested, naturally saw more in it than the rest of us. When we again emerged into the light of day and discovered the state of our shoes, I wished I had not been so inquisitive.

What very uncomfortable things people go through only to say they have done them; and how curious a phase of ambition it is to be anxious to boast of having performed certain exploits, which at best display only the emulation that is the essential characteristic of callow youth!

What else is most Alpine climbing?

I am not thinking now of the aspirations, nor the achievements of those ardent pioneers of science and art, whose love for Nature is so deep and wide that it yearns for familiarity with all her aspects; and who feel that no path is too dangerous, no road too rough, if by treading it they may learn more of her, and study her wilder as well as gentler moods.

These bright spirits are ever to be held in reverence, for they are the fathers of discovery, and to them we owe much of the understanding wherewith we comprehend the open secrets of this beautiful world.

But there is a distinct class, of whom, I fear, it

may be said that to them Nature is a sealed book. It is not to ponder over her wondrous works that they scale a high peak, or stand above a perilous precipice, but, alas! only to be able to speak of having "done it," or, as modern jargon puts it, "to break the record."

I am reminded of a remark I heard when a child, made by a member of the Alpine Club upon his first view of a fine hill in Wales; he said not a word praising the splendour of form and colour which delighted my childish heart, nor a syllable about the sublime grandeur that confronted us, but: "What a magnificent bit of climbing!"

This apparently was all the impression his mind received.

We had left the carriage at the top of the hill, and as we were not gifted with the ambition of the redoubtable individual who shocked my youthful imagination, we did not contemplate returning the way we had come, but of the two evils preferred the lesser, which was a tramp of three miles along the railway cutting. This rather appalled me, for I do not shine as a pedestrian; fortunately, the contractor lent me his horse, upon which I jogged along somewhat insecurely seated sideways on a man's saddle. The return to Nelson was not madly exciting, as the train journey took two hours; but we are

becoming accustomed to this style of travelling now, and if we were suddenly transported into the London and Brighton Express, we should at least fear some grave catastrophe was imminent.

September 24. About a picnic.—The air here is positively intoxicating, and is continually giving us cause to rejoice that we came during this month, for in summer, when the heat is semi-tropical, I am told that Nelson fully merits its soporific title of "Sleepy Hollow." Now

"All the mighty ravishment of spring"

is abroad, and the tender green of the young leaves, the largesse of innumerable blossoms, and the benison of a gracious sky, are the gifts in which we are delighting all day long.

Our friends Mr. and Mrs. Fell drove us yesterday to Cable Bay, eighteen miles from here, where the submarine cable from Australia terminates, and we found it one of the most interesting places we have visited in the Colony. We were a merry party, and weather and scenery were alike beautiful. Much of the country around was pastoral, but interspersed with bush, and amongst it trails of the native clematis, an exquisite white flower, clustered and climbed to the topmost branches of the forest trees.

We discovered a sheltered nook near a lovely river in which to have our luncheon, and, like all the al fresco repasts in this country, it was well arranged. New Zealanders generally manage a picnic better than most people; they never make any fuss at these impromptu entertainments, salt and other concomitants are rarely forgotten, and tea, that beverage dear to colonists, is always hot and strong—qualities I consider essential, though opinions differ widely as to the way it should be served, for did not a truthful and courteous Irishman reply to his hostess, when asked if the tea she had poured out for him was all right, "It is to me taste, me dear, wake and cauld, just as I loike it"?

I have often wondered why, after the days of childhood are over—those days when all changes are pleasures—we should still welcome the prospect of a repast in the open air. The very fact, perchance, that the stiffness and formality induced by four walls may be cast aside for a time has a charm for even children of a larger growth.

The punctual way in which we sacrifice daily to the household god who presides over the dinner-table, has always been irksome to me. Under the trees, eating does not seem so serious a function as when we are surrounded by the ceremony incident to ordinary habit. Possibly too frequent repetition of these unorthodox meals would pall, but as variety they are generally most agreeable.

Beautiful as it all was, I find it difficult now to write of what we saw during that drive to Cable Bay. I have a memory of blue and sparkling ocean, wooded islets, and bush-clad promontories; peeps through nearer labyrinths of branches, all overhung with trails of snowy blossoms, and the—

"Abundant life of sky and sun,
High floating clouds, low mists, and wheeling birds,
And waves that ripple shoreward all day long,
Whether the tide is setting in or out—
For ever rippling shoreward, dark and bright,
As lights and shadows and the shifting winds
Pursue each other in their endless play."

And, at the end of this, a glimpse of the wonderful handiwork evolved from the mysterious brain of man, the mechanisms and appliances of a submarine telegraph station, a sight which made assurance doubly sure that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy."

The aspect of the place was most bewildering, and well calculated to utterly overpower an ill-balanced mind. The head of the department, Mr. Browning, very kindly explained everything to us, and we found it all deeply interesting, though so complicated that it takes from two to three years for pupils to become skilful operators. The Flashing and Tracing

systems are both in use, and we had the satisfaction of cabling by each to the Sydney office. The reply we received to our first message was-

"Every one is down with influenza here;" and to the second-

"There must be a great many visitors at the New Zealand station to-day."

Possibly our frivolous questions or the epidemic had an irritating effect on the nerves of the department at Sydney.

B. has been obliged to go down to Greymouth, and we are to follow him there to-morrow, instead of going, as we had hoped, all together. This is very provoking, and my feelings are at present distinctly adverse to the business which has broken up our pleasant party. I have grown very fond of this little place, and my only consolation in bidding farewell to it is that we are to have more coaching, which has always a charm for me.

We shall take away some delightful memories of Nelson, as well as of many of its inhabitants.

Richardson's Hotel, Greymouth, September 28. Through the Long Gorge.—This is another anniversary of our wedding day, but we don't feel in the least degree ancient"If skies are only blue, and fields are green,
What need have we to grieve for hours departed?
Time still there is to laugh,
And youthful joy to quaff,
To frolic through fair days, and be light-hearted."

I think the desire to forget Anno Domini is a very common failing with most people, more especially at census time, that moment in a country's history which is said to make romancers of the whole community.

We left Nelson on Friday, and commenced our journey here in grey and threatening weather; we went by train to Belgrove, and then had forty-eight miles of coaching (through a country new to us) to Longford's, on the Buller River, where we stayed the night. We drove from Belgrove through the Motupiko Valley, passing the Motueka on our right, where the land is mostly in process of settlement, and not greatly interesting.

Leaving Motupiko, we entered Clarke's Valley, from which rose the Hope Saddle, where the views were far-reaching and grand, but to me sad beyond words, for the forests that covered the high ridge had been devastated by fire, and nothing was left but the rank and file of whitened stumps to show where the army of noble trees had stood. On all sides, far as the eye could reach, stretching into the dimmest

distance, as is so often the case in New Zealand, range after range of bush-covered hills.

As we crossed the Saddle, the atmospheric effects were strange and weird, for the vast surrounding expanse was only discerned through sheets of rain and wandering mists, that by turns hid and revealed the varied scene. Suddenly a gleam from a break in the cloud-obscured sky would shine upon the far mountains, though the nearer ranges were enveloped in gloom, while between valley and hill a rainbow was arched amongst the shimmering vapours, when the gleam would fade and curtains of rain cover up the landscape.

The influence of the wan, wild light that shed an almost unearthly glamour over all, and the strong sense of aloofness, were very potent. How good it is sometimes to experience a satisfaction of this kind, only a long residence near a town can prove. Over the Saddle into the Hope Valley we drove, and came soon to the meeting of waters, where the Hope and Buller rivers join, a lovely spot amongst bush hills, with translucent water glinting over shining pebbles, and distant peeps of dim foliage upon the farther hills, that filled the memory with pictures.

We followed the beautiful Buller River for the rest of the evening, but as it was deepening we could only peer through the twilight, always so brief here, and imagine how fair were the scenes we were passing.

There was a glimmer of high, white rocks. which we tried to distinguish; but night drew on apace, and rain blotted out the already indistinct surroundings, so we had to content ourselves with staring into the darkness ahead, while the driver related blood-curdling anecdotes of bushrangers and their exploits in former days, on and about the road we were following. This was perhaps more edifying than encouraging, and I concluded that there must be a latent love of the horrible in every one, for we listened with rapt attention, only laying the flattering unction to our souls that the events which he recalled were annals of the past, and had no more reality now than the "Ils" of the renowned Tartarin: for no longer were there figures in the dimness ready to start out with the old cry, "Bail up!" though the thick ranks of trees at our side, in the pitchy blackness of the night which our lamps only intensified, looked full of armed men.

While I was not ungrateful for the entertainment afforded by our garrulous Jehu, I rejoiced when the lights of Longford's shone through the gloom, and still more so, when we found the comfort of a huge, log fire, and the safety of four walls between us and

the imaginary terrors his too-vivid romances had conjured in our minds.

I wonder if there be any pleasure in life equal to that of toasting one's self into a state of warm beatitude after a long, cold journey? Surely this is a fulfilment that wholly realizes anticipation, which cannot be said of all mundane things. The glow from the firelight calls up an answering gleam in our hearts, and we are so content and amiable that a child might play with us undisturbed. Alas! that this should be only in the thawing stage, for after that process is complete, comes a moment when, having had enough of even so good a thing, our wisest course is to tear ourselves away from the insidious tempter before we are utterly demoralized.

We seemed to have scarcely settled down to our night's repose when a strong hand was heard at our doors, and a big voice uttered those unwelcome words: "Time to get up!"

Though the hour was most untimely, we had to obey the mandate, for our journey was planned to occupy fifteen hours, and it is difficult to get so many out of one ordinary day.

Fairly on the road, our early rising was well rewarded, for the morning was brilliant, and we

drove through the celebrated Buller Gorge, about the beauty of which I had heard so often. That it did not wholly realize my expectations was due to no absence of grandeur in the scenery, but rather to some lack of appreciation in myself; for, travelling so much in this country, I have acquired the habit of looking for a fresh scene at almost every bend and turn, and of being disappointed if the views be not varied and surprising. After driving twenty miles, where each mile is more or less a counterpart of the last, I felt inclined to say "Toujours perdrix," though it seems somewhat ungrateful to complain of an excess of beauty anywhere, when so many lands are barren of the gift.

I think my chief grievance, however, was the number of mining camps dotted about the Bush, breaking the solitude with perpetual suggestion of traffic and avarice. This mining section of the community is ubiquitous in New Zealand, and, even in the most out-of-the-way districts, I fear it will continue to be, so long as the coveted metal has the misfortune to be discovered.

Happily, there is one notable exception, and warmly did my heart respond when a friend remarked: "Providence deserves the gratitude of all lovers of Nature for having deposited no gold in the rocks of the Otira Gorge."

Taking the low ground of mundane consideration alone, it is credible that a possession such as the Buller would bring more revenue to the country in the time to come from tourist traffic, than will ever accrue from so shifting an element as a mining population.

Perhaps, when too late, it will be found that (if a simile so inappropriate may be used) the goose with the golden eggs has been slain, and many sublime parts of this wonderful land, which would have drawn thousands in search of pastures new across the seas, have been rendered valueless by the carelessness or indifference of irresponsible men, allowed to follow their fluctuating vocation as they chose.

I often find myself echoing the words of the minstrel of old in these desecrated places:

"Ye shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and mar every good piece of land with stones."

The satisfaction obtained from utterance of such a feeling being similar to that enjoyed by running up against a high, stone wall, it is little use dwelling upon it, so I will try to remember the Buller Gorge as though the root of all evil had no existence there, and the unsightly tents, as a species of vegetation peculiar to the district.

Certain scientists tell us we can make ourselves believe anything—even that pain is pleasure, "the readiness is all,"—so I am now going to apply a little of this mental alchemy to myself, and having commenced by fusing the gold, camps, machinery, and every other alien object all together in my mind's immaterial alembic, I can now enjoy the memories of that long vista of loveliness in perfect peace.

No eyes that are not blind, no heart that is not dead, could fail to appreciate the loving way in which Nature's tenderest touch has been laid upon every mile of lavish splendour wherewith the whole valley is decked.

Look where we would, there was no limit to the care bestowed upon it all to make it one of her pleasantest paths; above, below, on every side, towering peak, close-set fern and tree; and brown water flowing smoothly above deep pools, or swishing and swirling over white rocks that broke it into creamy foam and tossed into the air its headed bubbles, while the hurrying stream still rushed along, alike unheeding opposing rock and tempting pool, in haste to reach the great grey sea whence it could nevermore return; and thus for mile after mile, the river wound between its fair, green ramparts.

Alas! there was one drawback to perfect enjoyment, and even this would have seemed slight had the journey been shorter: the bad road full of small rocks and boulders, over which we bumped and jolted till we ached in every bone, made us feel we were taking our pleasure in much too serious a fashion.

As we rattled down, one exquisite turn in the valley disclosed some buildings ahead, which, from a distance, looked somewhat like a Swiss village, but on nearer view proved to be that abomination of desolation, a mining settlement.

The architects of this same township of Lyell would seem to have had an eye to the artistic in their selection of a romantic situation for its site, but had displayed no taste whatever in the construction of a straggling street of wooden shanties, level with the highway in front, but raised on piles from the sloping bank of the river behind.

The three or four public-houses led one to suppose that the only reason for the town's existence was to supply spirituous liquors to its inhabitants.

From Lyell, the road wound on to the junction of the Buller and Inangahua rivers, where there was an accommodation house, with the usual delightful log fire, which by turns scorched us with flame and choked us with smoke. Here we had luncheon with all comers, a fashion that prevails in these wayside inns, and is certainly one means of studying human nature, though possibly not the most desirable; however, these customs grow more familiar to us, and the fads of travellers have to be pocketed everywhere.

Soon after leaving the junction, our coach crossed the Inangahua on a large raft or floating bridge, propelled by the current, and guided by a steel rope slung over the river. In high floods, this raft occasionally breaks away, and is carried down the swift stream into the beautiful valleys through which it winds. The Bush has not been destroyed upon the hills, yet it did not hide the snowy ranges; but, nearing Reefton, we found that acres of it had been laid waste, a most repugnant sight, for the bleaching trunks were standing as silent witnesses of the devastation that had marred their beauty, and turned the glories of a smiling forest into a valley of death.

At Reefton, B. was waiting to meet us, and had arranged for a special engine and carriage to bring us over the Midland line, which had just been completed to Stillwater; it is to be formally opened at Reefton to-day, but we consider that we accomplished this

unofficially.

Of course Gwlad and I thought it the very nicest railway on which we had ever travelled, and talked glibly enough, I think much to B.'s amusement, about the engineering difficulties we had overcome! We also expressed the wish that all the future journeys upon it would be undertaken with hearts as light as those of the happy trio who made the first.

Then we approved of the route chosen, and remarked upon the comfort of the carriages; in fact, our benignity was inexhaustible, and though, in our ignorance, we imagined the speed might have been increased without either risk or great expenditure, our mood had scarcely an element of criticism, and we succeeded in convincing B. that, heterodox as it is to our private opinions to approve of any kind of railroad, we had nothing but unstinted admiration for the construction upon which he has spent so much time and thought.

We found the names of the stations delightful, and had ample opportunity for studying them. Where native designations existed, B. has retained them, and wherever it was possible, has changed those that were English into Maori, which are quaint and musical, and have at least the merit of being characteristic, while "Springfield," "Belgrove," and "Westport" suggest nothing significant to either traveller or resident.

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Somewhere in this journal I described Greymouth, though not in a laudatory manner, at least to the satisfaction of my impressions at the time; but this afternoon we are going to see a gold dredge working, so I may have something to record later, for though it may not be very entertaining, doubtless it will prove instructive.

Springfield Hotel, October 2. "How widely its agencies vary—to save, to ruin, to curse, to bless!"—We went over the dredge, and were initiated into all the mysteries of drawing gold from the sea. Judging from the vast amount of machinery employed, with apparently such small results, it seemed to be "much cry and little wool," though possibly those tiny particles of the precious metal were of more value than we, in our hurried glimpse, could rightly estimate. It was most interesting to learn the origin of its presence on the beaches in such quantities as to make the process remunerative.

The generally accepted theory is that the gold formerly existed in quartz reefs, back in the main mountain ranges. These reefs suffering denudation by the heavy rainfall of the district (some 120 inches per annum), expose the gold-bearing quartz, which subsequently becomes disintegrated by frost, and is then hurried down by mountain torrents and swiftly-flowing rivers, to the ocean. Masses of broken rock and shingle are also carried down, and in rolling over and over become natural crushing machinery, pulverizing the quartz into sand, and thus liberating the metal, which is reduced to almost impalpable powder, and in this condition it reaches the sea.

The action of the prevailing winds produces waves that cause a current to strike the beach at an angle in a northerly direction, so sifting the particles of sand and gold as to concentrate them into belts and patches of varying thickness, and from time to time (by changes of coast-line and deposits of drift material) sheets have been buried, and now overlie each other at depths of from four to thirty feet below the present level of the beach. Down to the water-line these auriferous beds can be worked by miners with simple appliances, but at greater depths dredges must be used, the method of working being quite simple.

The dredge is placed in position, the long row of buckets bringing up wash-dirt and stones, which are passed over a grating to separate the stones from the black sand and gold, and the latter, placed on plush blankets or cocoa-nut matting, are washed by a powerful stream of water. The gold and sand adhering to the blankets are afterwards turned off into a small tub and drained. Quicksilver is now added, which forms an amalgam with the gold, and this is heated in a retort, when pure gold is left behind by the distillation of the mercury, which is afterwards recondensed for future use.

Life on a dredge must be one long misery, for the deafening uproar of stones continually dropping down the shaft, combined with the suspense and anxiety which must be borne, lead one to think it rather too high pressure a form of obtaining a livelihood, even

were a huge fortune the result of such labours; but when it is remembered how small a number of those employed in this fluctuating occupation ever realize anything for their pains, save heartbreak and disappointment, the poor fellows who follow it are, indeed, greatly to be commiserated.

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We had grand weather for our return journey from Greymouth, and began it in a somewhat curious way by a drive of fourteen miles over the beach, and through the Bush in a tram-car which went on wooden lines. The track, quite a narrow cutting in some parts, was overhung with foliage and blossom, and on that lovely, spring morning the solemn forest was gay and bright with snowy masses of clematis, drooping clusters of golden Kowhai,\* tiny half-hidden blooms of the red Konini,† and everywhere the self-asserting "Bush Lawyer," which has gained its name from the tenacity of its prickly spikes that cling and hold everything as securely in their toils as could the most persistent member of the legal profession.

After about seven miles, the tram line was brought to an abrupt termination at the Teremakau River, which was crossed by means of a cage or box open at both ends, with room in it for six passengers, and suspended from, and travelling along, two fixed ropes

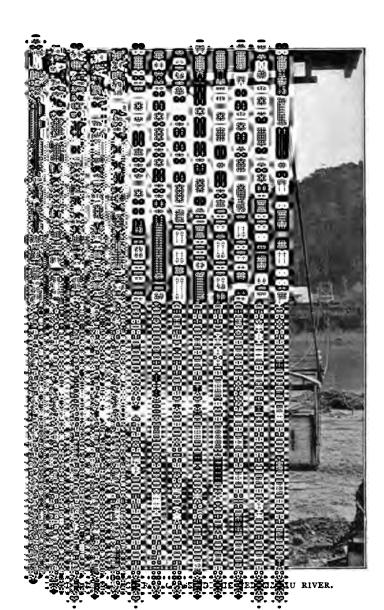
<sup>\*</sup> Sophora tetraptera.

<sup>†</sup> Fuchsia excorticata,

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attached to the banks, and propelled by an endless rope worked by an engine at the side of the river. I felt what I should suppose would be the sensation of flying on the back of a huge bird, for the cage was high in air, and, being covered, the wheels working at the top could not be seen.

After that experience, we had seven miles more in another tram to Kumara, and then the long drive across to Bealey.

During the journey by coach, we repeatedly heard from the depths below us a kind of wail or sing-song chant, which, to say the least, sounded peculiar. Presently the driver informed us that inside the coach was an old Maori woman who was travelling across the country to attend the funeral of a rich sister who had died near Christchurch. The monotonous dirge was a lament she evidently thought it incumbent upon her to drone out at intervals, for, between whiles, or when the coach stopped, she was exceedingly merry with all comers.

And, having arrived here, we find the air is so invigorating we have decided to stay for a few days, quietly resting before we go down to the plains to find ourselves in a grove once more; and this place, which has not many attractions in itself, will be congenial to us now, as our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Clifford, are here also.

## CHAPTER XV.

## WHERE SHEEP-FOLDS ARE PLEASANT AND PASTURES REJOICE.

"Repose fills all the generous space
Of undulant plain; the rook and crow
Hush! 'Tis as if a silent grace
By Nature murmured, calmed the face
Of heaven above and earth below."
RUSSELL LOWELL.

Compton, December 1. We live and learn.—At last we are really going to spend a few days on a station; often we have been on the point of so doing, but this time I hope nothing will prevent the visit.

How astonished people would be if, on my return home, I could not describe my view of the phase of life here which is least unfamiliar to them, though many of my good friends have very hazy ideas of New Zealand, at which I scarcely wonder, seeing how little is spoken there of this Colony or her concerns in the daily newspaper literature, where these islands are usually represented as too diminutive and too far off

to be of any but the mildest interest. Small they are, no doubt, covering, collectively, only a rather greater area than England, Scotland, and Wales, and distant by such weary leagues that, to reach them, we have come so far round the world as to be a little on the other side, which, in a less Irish fashion, means that the voyage from Europe by the Cape is longer than that of return by the Horn.

Another popular fallacy is that the residents here live in barns, and are surrounded by Maoris! Doubtless the wooden houses have given rise to the first theory, while travellers' tales are responsible for the second.

I am reminded of an episode which occurred at home during the season of the Colonial Exhibition, when many distinguished colonists were entertained by various corporations. One day B. happened to pass an hotel in a provincial town, at the door of which a number of carriages and a crowd of expectant onlookers were collected. Amongst these were two small street Arabs whom B. overheard discussing the situation.

"I say, Billy, vot's all these kerridges for?"

"Wy, don't you know? for the kilonial wisitors, in course, you stoopid."

At that moment these strangers emerged from the hotel and drove away, whereupon the surprised and indignant little waif, with the profoundest disdain, remarked:

"Kilonial wisitors be blowed! Why, Billy, they ain't even black!"

When I recall my own entirely fictitious imaginings before arriving here, I feel I must be tolerant, for, of course, in those vague surmises I did not expect things to be as I have found them.

Why I should have thought that the latter part of the nineteenth century had not travelled round the world I cannot say, but maybe the idea was prompted by an unconscious and unexpressed longing that somewhere, perchance here, it would be possible to light on an Arcadia in which fin de siècle and all its influences were unknown, whose serenity anarchy, socialism, strifes and strikes never ruffled, and where all the new "isms" and "ologies" were unsought; where luxury and want in close proximity would not shame us, where introspection never planted thorns of doubt, nor the so-called "search after truth" poured contempt upon our ancient faith; where, far from confusion of theories and desires, there would be peace, and, in communion with Nature, safety.

But humanity is the same all the world over, and however far we voyage on this lower plane, the Happy Isles are not to be reached; so, having dreamed our dream, we generally awake to dree our weird, and to drift with the tide, which, alas! has set out, often with strong winds, from the haven where we would be.

In face of the reality, the pictures I had drawn of material things were primitive and crude in the extreme, and it amuses me now to remember how very few were the amenities of life which I, in my ignorance, expected to find. Amongst others, the sound of electric bells, the appearance of the telephone in many Christchurch houses, and oh, joy of joys! hosts of new and inexpensive books of excellent type, which arrive here simultaneously with their issue at home, were some of the surprises that awaited me. For a time these luxuries and necessities continued to assert themselves here and there, but now custom has familiarized me with most of the conditions of social life in the country.

Well, once more my inquiring spirit, which is in a chronic state of wanting to know, is to be gratified, and I am to be initiated into the ways of station life.

Since our return from Nelson, Christchurch has been en fête; the Governor, Lord Onslow, Lady Onslow, and their children, have been staying here. They are most hospitable, and their balls, dinner and garden parties have been very pleasant, and as the Jockey Club races have been also recently held, we have had as much gaiety in this city of the plains as any one could reasonably want.

Springfield. Methuen, December 14.—This is B.'s birthday, which we commemorated before leaving home. I always hold that these anniversaries are delightful, and at no age should we think we have outlived the charm of remembering them.

I wonder if he will use the presents we gave him, for he has a kind of mania that such things should be carefully put away, being too precious for ordinary wear and tear. As this is a polite fiction, I endeavour always to procure a gift irresistibly necessary as well as nice, which is difficult; men have so few (attainable!) wants, and, as a rule, are not endowed (like women) with the love of accumulating.

B. has gone across the country to-day, and I have brought Gwlad here for a visit to our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Cameron. We had a short journey over the plains to Lyndhurst, and from there a drive of six miles to this house, which is unfortunately called Springfield, a name that often confuses it with the small town at the commencement of the West-Coast road. I wish it had a different designation, but it is the only thing I would have altered here; for if this be station life, I fail to discern where the "roughing it," which is said to be synonymous, comes in. Refined comfort and well-being are studied almost to a science, and we are encompassed

with all the "sweet observances" that hospitality can devise.

December 17. Wool-gathering.—At night. I find it difficult to express my sensations out here on these infinite plains, surrounded and outlined only by the wide arch of a limitless sky, for even when the broad sunlight shines upon its acres of pasture, and gilds its endless fields of grain, the scene is vast and lonely.

Now, when all the world is asleep, and the mystic moonlight sweeps the landscape far as the eye can reach, smooth as the ocean in a calm, while the wind makes its weird music in the near pine woods, and the lamb's plaintive bleating echoes from the distant paddocks, the impression of perpetuity is supreme, and in such moments as these the awing sense of the measureless indefiniteness of Eternity creeps into the spirit, and, in the effacement of earthly limits, we seem to realize the unending *Ever* of the Hereafter.

Strange thoughts to come in what might be considered the prosaic environment of a sheep station; but there is no accounting for the mind's vagaries after a nor'-wester day, during which the mercury has been amusing itself climbing up among the nineties, only descending from that exalted position at nightfall.

December 18.—In reckless defiance of the thermometer to-day, we walked over to the wool-shed, and Mr. Cameron showed us the various processes connected with shearing, now in full swing. When out of the shade of the pine trees round the grounds, the breathless glare on the road was something to remember, and though short the distance, we were grateful for the shelter of a roof, even if it also covered a pervading odour of fleeces. As I do not want to forget what I saw, nor our kind host's explanation of the modus operandi, I will be like the Beefeaters at the Tower, and reel it off without a pause.

At the main entrance of the shearing-shed, which is a long building with pens down the centre, and an outlet at each end, stands a wool-press, and behind this are the bins into which the fleeces, after having been classed, are placed preparatory to being pressed.

At one side, down the whole length of the building, the shearers work, thirteen of whom are called a "full board." Some of these are so proficient at their craft that they can shear as many as a hundred and sixty sheep in a day, the best and quickest of whom is called the "ringer." The sheep to be shorn are brought from outlying paddocks, and placed in smaller and more convenient enclosures adjoining the wool-sheds, from which are drafted, from time

to time, a number sufficient to keep the pens, inside the building, full. Towards the close of the day's work, usually about six o'clock, these pens are again filled, in order to allow the shearers to commence duty at five a.m., it being necessary to have the sheep under cover during the night, so that the dews may not affect the wool, which must be perfectly dry for the process.

Through the small gate shutting in each pen, the shearer drags a sheep, generally by the leg, and turning it on its side, runs his shears under the long wool with such celerity that in the space of from three to five minutes the much-relieved animal is sent on its way rejoicing, through a small door leading into outside pens, of which there are thirteen. The last sheep to be shorn is often the most difficult to catch, and is called the "cobbler."

Until the outside pens are quite filled, the sheep remain in them, when the gate leading from the pens is opened, and the silly creatures run and jump through, being counted or "tallied" whilst they are skipping into another enclosure, whence they emerge, and in a narrow alley are branded. This operation is very speedily accomplished, the machine in use being a kind of stamper, bearing the brand of the station, IB., with letters placed at the end of a long iron implement, which is dipped into a bucket of specially

prepared mixture of various colours, indicating the different classes of sheep; these are stamped upon their backs much in the same way as envelopes are post-marked, and after this operation the poor creatures are set at liberty, whereupon they again jump into air through the final gate, as though there were some high obstruction in their path.

Meanwhile the shorn fleeces are carried to a large table in the wool-shed by a man appropriately named "Fleecy," and are spread out by four wool-pickers, who tear away the bad parts and fold the fleeces square, passing them to the classer, who, in turn, after a rapid examination, hands them to his attendant, and he places them in their respective bins according to their quality. The waste pieces are thrown into a heap, where they are again picked over before being sent to the scouring works.

The next operation is that of pressing. Into a large iron receptacle, with movable sides, an empty sack is placed, when the iron box is raised by means of machinery to the level of the bins. A man stands inside the box packing the fleeces handed to him, treading them down as they are put in. When the sack is full, he jumps out, and a press comes down upon the wool, after which three times as many fleeces can be packed into it. When the sack will hold no more, an iron lid, under which a covering for the

bale has been stretched, comes down, and the covering is stitched on to the sack, when the bale is finished. Before shipment, two of these bales are put into a press, and when securely fastened by iron bands, come out less bulky than one bale before the final pressing.

I have been led further afield than I expected, for, despite my horror of statistics, the subject interests me, and I find the whole method is entirely dissimilar from that employed in the old park at home, where the shearer catches a sheep and gets some one else to hold it while he literally sits down to what often proves a lengthy operation. Perhaps time is not of much value, and labour cheaper, or the scissors may be old-fashioned; but certainly it has one advantage, for the poor beast does not stand so great a chance of having its flesh lacerated, as is sometimes the case here in the shearing of inefficient or impatient workmen.

The heat has been so great to-day that a number of sheep died while being driven from the outlying paddocks.

"But the wheat and the cattle are all my care,
The rest is the will of God."

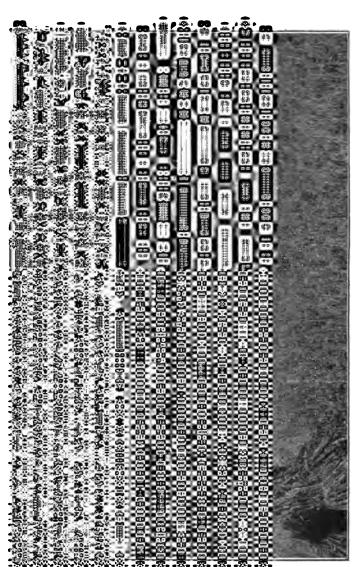
Each day Mrs. Cameron has driven me long

distances about the country, so that now the plains are cutting themselves up in my mind into districts, and therefore do not look so endless. On these expeditions, Gwlad rides with Mr. Cameron, and my hostess's two charming little girls go with us. I have named them the "Dots," and they delight me with their sweet ways and their large, shady hats.

One day we drove sixteen miles to Mount Hutt, where we had luncheon with our dear friend Mrs. Murray Ainslie. Her place is situated on the beautiful Rakaia River, which here flows through a gorge, a rent in the flat land that is very picturesque, and, backed by noble mountains, might almost be said to be unique, but that in many of its characteristics it bears so great a likeness to the Waimakariri Gorge, and, doubtless, to others, so it may be only found peculiarly unique to New Zealand.

The wide, blue water, broken by islands of shingle; the wild tussock tufts, and tangle of flax on its margin; the terrace-like banks that outline the river in its lower reaches, with here and there patches of bush, which give a dense olive background; all have upon them the stamp of their native land alone.

Over the strong current, below the homestead, a bridge has been constructed, one span of which has its stone supports resting upon a wooden islet midway across the stream; in this instance, expediency



SPRINGFIELD.

and natural beauty have gone hand-in-hand, a somewhat uncommon fellowship!

What an attraction a swiftly flowing river has for poor human beings who crawl so lamely through this world! Just to watch its intentness is satisfying.

We gazed into its blue, transparent waters, and thought how pleasant it would be to lie in its cool and limpid depths in that broiling sunshine.

As I cannot swim, I think my position on the bridge, though certainly considerably warmer, was, undoubtedly, less suicidal.

How interminably straight are the roads here! sharp-cut lines, defined by close-clipped hedges, pierce into the remote distance uncompromising and unpicturesque. Yet there is harmony to heart's desire in the surroundings, and if one can but remember that roads are merely means to an end, and not flowery paths in which to linger, even the utilitarian aspect of these prolonged and unbroken highways is restful to the mind. Mile after mile on each side the billowy grain looks like the harmless swell of a rolling ocean, and here and there we see a drooping head that wavers and curtsies to the wandering air.

There is a sense of breeziness and freedom in thinking of paddocks two hundred to six hundred acres in extent, one of which would be a fair-sized farm-holding in the dear old "tight little island" far away. Our host has numbers as large, and they contain the best and most level crops I have ever seen; all these results proving how exhaustless must be the energy, how perfect the management in times of ploughing and seeding, and how the skill is aided by the strong help of gentle rain and ripening sunbeams, which appear to be unfailing in this country.

December 21. "Flat burglary as ever was committed."—As we drove back this evening from a picnic in Alford Forest (a wooded nook among the hills miles away behind the station), we saw men here and there lying by the hedges at the roadside, and others with packs struggling along, apparently tired out. About these wayfarers Mr. Cameron had something to tell me, for they were odd members of the idle class known as the swaggers and sundowners Rolf Bolderwood has described so well in his thrilling romances. They are thorns in the flesh, and crumpled rose-leaves in the bed of the squatter, for, come what may, they must always be reckoned with, and they seem to require the most patient consideration on account of the power for evil they might become.

So far as I could discriminate, swaggers (those who, snail-like, carry their worldly possessions on their backs) are men occasionally willing to do a day's work for a night's lodging and a couple of meals. Sundowners (those who have no possessions to carry) walk from station to station during the day, and, sleeping under a haystack until sunset, make their appearance at that hour before the "whares" or huts provided for them, and demand from the owners supper and shelter, which are generally granted. The baleful influences of a refusal are set forth graphically by Bolderwood when the farmsteading of one of his heroes is burnt to the ground by some discontented members of this vagrant fraternity.

At Springfield, as well as on all large stations, a man is employed solely to prepare meals for these casual though unavoidable visitors. The owner of a small property told me that one night, when only he and his sister were at their lonely homestead, eighty of these uninvited guests made their appearance; and, of course, asked for food and lodging, which he was fortunately able to supply; but as each meal costs the squatter sixpence a head, contract price, those eighty suppers and breakfasts alone meant four pounds out of our friend's pocket—a pretty considerable tax to pay for the pleasure of

housing and feeding a number of irresponsible, and usually ungrateful beings.

During our drives, we seem to have passed leagues of forest belts, chiefly composed of Eucalyptus and Pinus insignis. These, Mr. Cameron tells me, have been planted over the plains as a break against the prevailing wind, and have been found a most beneficial shelter for the crops. Before their introduction, and in districts where they do not exist, the entire surface of a field has often been blown away by the raging fury of the nor'-westers.

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How dull, prosaic, and statistical I am becoming, the result, no doubt, of the inquiring spirit! I think our friends are sometimes amused at my desire for information on many subjects which to them are matters of course, and, therefore, not so interesting.

Compton, December 22. Home again.—Gwlad and I returned to-day, and in bidding farewell to our kind host and hostess, we heartily echoed their oft-expressed wish that we might speedily return. As we were leaving, the "Dots" brought Gwlad a mysterious little parcel, offering it with many injunctions that it was not to be opened till she was in the train. After we had started, she discovered

the wee fairies had given her a box full of their favourite ice-cream biscuits, secretly saved for her, to comfort her when she parted from them, as she had frequently told them she would be so sorry when we had to leave! This gift greatly amused and delighted Gwlad, who is very fond of these children.

## CHAPTER XVI.

BY TRACKLESS PATHS WE SEARCH FOR THOUGHT SERENE.

"Oh, sweet estate!

Illimitably fair,

No measure, wall, or bar, or gate,

Secure as sky and air."

Compton, January, 4, 1892. "Of things to come."—Again we are to go wandering round, for my heart is restless to see more of this lovely land we are perhaps to leave in April.

Doubtless it is foolish to be twisting so many strands to hold us captive, but even though the strong cable be severed when we are adrift and away from the influence of the fair scenes that crowd upon us now, Memory's tendrils will be fetters, too, that never can be broken.

In the dear old home in the land of the Noontide to which we return, there will be tumultuous life in its every phase, and, where'er we travel, interminable civilization; but here, in the land of the Dawn, is the immeasurable solitude, the unutterable silence of the wildest dream-country.

Truly in our hearts we shall keep a goodly heritage of pictured thoughts to lighten the possible blank of later days, since

"Fortune never comes with both hands full."

We have not far to seek for fresh fields and new pastures; the only difficulty is to know which to choose. I have, however, always been fascinated by the scenes that have kept their Maori names, feeling they must possess some subtle quality to have thus withstood the tides of chance and change, as though they were sentient things that could defend themselves. Of these, the southern lakes have preserved this characteristic beyond danger of alteration, and Te Anau, Wakatipu, Manapouri, Hawea, and Wanaka still retain the spell which of yore inspired designations so musical and suggestive.

They all sound pleasant, and I am sure the reality will be beautiful, so I have decided to spend some of these lovely summer weeks of January there, taking with me Miss Mein and Gwlad. B. has to be on the West Coast, and so is unable to accompany us. He so seldom divests himself of his harness, and yet no one appreciates more thoroughly halts in the hurry of work and responsibility. Did I not know

that he too will be in the midst of the Nature he loves so well, I should indeed grudge myself the pleasure of this visit, which we hope will prove delightful.

Eichardt's Hotel, Queenstown, Lake Wakatipu, January 16. We go far, but not far enough.—Verily it cannot be said that courage was lacking to the "dauntless three" who, after two days of hard travelling (ten and thirteen hours respectively), have at last reached this distant haven. Though our object was not so meritorious, being only that of healthy enjoyment, the heat—and dare I write the speed also?—made us feel like an African expedition! The first journey was to Dunedin, where we spent the night, starting next morning at seven for Kingston.

The country we went through on the second day was undulating, and dotted about with small townships and thriving manufactories. Upon the wall of one of the latter, a sign was affixed on which was printed the words, "Rabbit Factory." I conclude that in some such places the unfortunate little marauders are cooked to be sold in tins which occasionally bear the legend, "Roast Chicken," though at the first glance this advertisement seemed

to convey the idea that they were produced by machinery there—a work of supererogation in a district where they already abound in millions.

Penetrating still further into the country, we passed the long Taieri plains, and Lakes Waihola and Tuakitoto, haunts of innumerable wild fowl; and then across the Clutha, the longest river in New Zealand, which, to be geographical, carries to the sea more water than the Nile. In the early days of the gold craze, beds of the precious metal were found all along its course.

After leaving the town of Balclutha, and the almost interminable Waimea plains, we at length reached Lumsden, where the scenery was wild and grand; in the foreground stream and tableland, in the distance ramparts of lofty mountains, the outer ranges of Lake Wakatipu. Here were apparent numerous results of glacial action, for, blocking the view on both sides, were long moraines, like elevated railway embankments stretching right into Kingston, and there the line and our somewhat wearisome journey terminated together, for, although we had still two hours to pass in the steamer, we looked upon that as a relief from the cramped discomfort of the train.

Kingston is a small place situated at the foot of Lake Wakatipu, the length of which is fifty miles. Here rise barren mountains, whose chief charm is grandeur of form, and a singular power of reflecting the exquisite colours of the ever-changing sky.

On the little steamer were brought together all sorts and conditions of men and women, from the bishop whose mission in Queenstown was to confirm, to the Salvation Army captain who advertised (not in undertones) that his calling in life was to convert!

A mixed gathering, containing some members of the class who in this country are known as "Old Identities," but whom I heard an aged man designate, with a *lapsus linguæ*, that had in it much unconscious irony: "Old Nonentities."

As we passed to and fro upon the deck, the sun was setting, and the memory of that wild and glorious pageant I shall never lose. All day the wind had been nor'-westerly, and the breathless hours close and sultry, while above the horizon had curved the long, low arch that, with the soft and curdled grey of the sky's wide canopy, so unfailingly betokens the semi-tropic storms of this island. In the evening, the scene was transfigured; the great black peaks of the frowning mountains were outlined against a background of deepest blue, while above, flaming scarlet banners were unfurled, and creamy flecks of downy cloud lay against the serene and sombre firmament until the sun dropped, then, with every moment, the dim twilight stole some life from gorgeous sky and giant

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headland, and soon a quick curtain of darkness was spread over the deep and placid water.

And so in the silence of night we held on our course, and ere long reached this destination, the little hamlet of Queenstown, which lies about half-way up the lake. It is a pretty place nestling in a bay, and sheltered by mountains, the most curious of these being the well-named "Remarkables," a range of wild-looking volcanic rocks, riven and torn into wonderful shapes, whose deeply scarred fissures, down which flow icy streams, appear like the furrows drawn upon a tired old face, by care and countless tears.

Looking over the lake, we see Walter and Cecil Peaks, and other heights, rising straight from the water, and these vary from five to eight thousand feet. The charm of the whole scene is in the incessant change for ever acting upon it; no lengthened period does the landscape wear the same aspect, but it is truly one endless panorama of enchantments.

At times, the icy lake is smooth as a mirror, then a breeze springs up, and its surface is broken by impatient baby wavelets, that flow in not with the constant motion of the sea, but beat upon the shore with quick and turbulent little throbs, as though in too great haste to measure time.

A weird tract of water with an evil history.

Its depth in many parts is said to be almost soundless, and the body of no man drowned therein has evermore been found. There are sundry versions of the origin of the quaint name, "Wakatipu," but it is hard to know which of them all is the true one; the most common is "troubled water," another "holy," from "tapu," and a third is suggested by the tradition that in the profound depths of the unfathomed abyss the monster Taipo has his dwelling, where he waits to draw the dead men into his dark hole. Such a theory is too gruesome and ghoul-like for me this sunny day, and the wee waves are laughing so merrily that if they cover as dread a secret, they are but rank deceivers. I think the curious shape of the lake is responsible for the probable, though uncertain, solution in the interpretation, "Bent Canoe." No one is quite sure how Maori words should be written, for the pioneers and miners who have transmitted them, have garbled some so grossly, that much of his own language must be well-nigh unintelligible to the native.

Doubtless, a race so deeply imbued with the spirit that creates romance must have had many legends of this "big sea water," which are now unfortunately lost.

I think the conquerors of Maoriland, in their excessive haste to acquire territory, deemed its traditions

of minor importance, though they thereby forfeited much of the picturesque charm that lingers round a scene immortalized by its history.

> "Experience is a dumb, dead thing; The victory's in believing."

Sunday evening.—To-day we have been to the Confirmation Service, held in the pretty little church here. It seemed so strange to find all the ceremonies incident to the solemn occasion so far away from the busy world as is the heart of these distant hills. Bishop Neville, of Dunedin, whose diocese extends over many a league of mountain and glen, officiated, and the candidates were both numerous and attentive.

I found myself moralizing even more than usual, and wondering what their profession would mean to these children in after years. I felt saddened, too, thinking of the uphill trudge it is for all of us through life to fulfil the promise, whatever the form it takes, of the immortal vow (which, God bless her! she has kept) of our beloved Queen at the dawning of her greatness, in the words: "I will be good!"

And on the shore the wavelets are rippling their eternal little mockery, and seem to emphasize the contempt of Nature for the futility of human resolves.

How true it is that-

"Other pleasures be Sweeter e'en than gaiety"!

We cannot be said to feel gay here, and yet it is joy enough for me to watch the endless succession of pictures sun and sky paint each hour upon mountain and lake. Happiness, after all, is not a fixed state, laid down by rule and line in certain localities for every man alike, and the complete satisfaction of one is, fortunately, often the unmitigated boredom of another. I say fortunately, because haunts that are termed slow are generally quiet, restful, and unfrequented. A special boon this last!

I am so devoted to slowness in my natural surroundings that here I resent even the daily coming and going of the small steamers, the fuss and excitement causing almost too much distraction! Sometimes we go to the pier, when they arrive or leave, and are occasionally amused by little episodes connected therewith. Yesterday some individuals ran down after the boat had started; and although, previous to its departure, the whistle had been blown loudly at stated intervals, these dilatory persons fondly imagined she would be put back, and were

evidently much disconcerted when they saw her steadily going ahead.

This afternoon, numbers of "Salvation lasses," who arrived by the steamer, have been preaching and singing in the square before the hotel. I did think St. Paul said women should be silent in assemblies. Ah! but he lived before these later days. It seems strange to employ a belligerent method for the gathering in of wandering souls; but, if it guide any helpless spirit groping through the swamps and fogs of an unknown country to a firmer footing, and to the light of the land beyond, it must be one of God's ways, and it matters little, though at present it may seem to some of us crude and compulsory.

January 18. In which we do not wish to hark back.—
To-day we have been for a long drive by Kawarau
Falls, and through the Shotover Gorge to Arrowtown.
The country was very curious, more especially where
the river flowed in a narrow and rugged ravine—

"Where rocks were rudely heap'd and rent,
As by some spirit turbulent;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And everything unreconciled."

The "turbulent spirit" there was that of the everubiquitous miner, which has desolated the banks and polluted the once pure waters of the stream for ever. Arrowtown lies in a small, rocky basin, and below it flows the Arrow River.

While the horses rested, we waited in the "parlour" of a little inn whose decoration, old-fashioned, without being antique, amused us immensely. Acres of woolwork covered the furniture, beaded mats of grotesque design bestrewed the tables; upon the walls hung many coloured prints in fir-cone frames, and on the mantelshelf, evidently the pièce de résistance (oh, spirit of Oscar Wilde!) stood a high vase, full of miraculous, wax flowers, under a glass shade! How is it possible that so great a variety of these wondrous and impossible things could have been evolved from the inner consciousness of any one person?

We cannot be too deeply and reverently grateful to the Brethren of the Sunflower, who so effectually swept the old order from the face of earth that the only remnants still remaining are in the uttermost parts thereof.

January 20. In which I am a coward again.—Gwlad, who is nothing if not venturesome, had a wild desire to swim in the lake yesterday, at the very thought of which, remembering the legend, a panic seized me, and I would not hear of it until she

assured me, in a certain wheedling way she has, that it would be perfectly safe if I accompanied her in a boat.

I had a feeling that it was a distinct case of the blind leading one who could see, but after much persuasion I consented, as is the manner of some foolish mothers, of whom I am one; and I rejoiced greatly when she afterwards informed me that she found the water so icy cold, uncomfortably deep, and so far from pleasant, she did not care to stay in it. The sun was shining with all his might, and did his very best to make it nice and warm, but, except in the shallows, his anxiety was of no effect. I was only too much pleased to have Gwlad in the boat again, for though she now swims like a mermaid, I prefer she should not risk the danger of joining that sisterhood of the deep, whose fate it is ever to be singing wild welcomes to drowned men.

In the home of the winds.—We have just returned from a long drive on a preposterous road—save the mark!—high and ever higher up the mountain, which track eventually leads to the celebrated Skipper's Mine; at least, the popular version of its direction and destination has it so.

Our experience was that we were transported to

the back of the north wind, through a region possessed by the fetterless airs of heaven alone, into a weird, elemental, unpeopled space, thousands of feet up and away beyond everywhere.

This exceedingly lucid description is like speech which conceals thought, and does not convey the least idea of facts.

Some of Doré's "Inferno" pictures would be handy guides to many parts of this chaotic district; nothing less tragic would depict our wild surroundings on that bleak hill's crest. Over the saddle, giant rocks like towers of a cathedral, whose masses were chanted by the many-voiced choirs of the tempest, stood before us, frowning and forbidding, or rose sheer out from the abyss below, sport of a bygone cataclysm that tore them from the parent bed, and flung them far and wide upon the unresisting ground.

One mountain uplifted his sublime crown, whose prototype might have been Horeb, "the mount of God," standing, as it did, alone, serene, and apart, surely the promise of heaven above and beyond the desolation of earth.

Winding down the steep and dangerous defile with never a superfluous foot of space between our wheels, and what Leland is pleased to call the "Ewigkeit," we came at long-last to the Shotover River, beside which we drove for a few miles, and having reached a small inn at a locality named Maori Point, decided to leave the investigation of Skipper's Mine for some future opportunity. By doing this, I understand we missed an interesting sight, for the mine is worked by electricity, and is said to be worth the trouble of travelling a long distance to inspect.

On our return, after a perfunctory luncheon, we again passed the river, and saw a droll contrivance by which one of the miners propelled himself over the deep current from his hut to his claim. On a rope slung across the stream hung a small cage, that of course unassisted ran down the rope to the middle, from whence the passenger pulled himself to the other side by means of a loose cord, hanging in loops from the rope across this very unpermanent way.

Anticipation.—Ever since coming to Queenstown I have been wondering what lies beyond the tantalizing turn in the lake where it trends to the north. The high mountain ranges guard the secret well, and by their impenetrable stolidity and silence have excited in me a feeling too strong to be denied, and even if the solution should prove disappointing, I must make the attempt to discover the answer to my wistful question.

Perhaps the desire to move on has increased with the fading of our interest in this place, where we find the human element too much *en evidence*, though our environment seems as fair, and the lights and shades on mountain and lake as ever new and varied as before.

We hear that the village of Glenorchy, our goal at the head of the lake, is quiet and isolated enough to satisfy the most unenthusiastic misanthrope, and although we do not class ourselves in so morbid a category, it will nevertheless come as a relief to us to be for a time beyond the region of perpetual man.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## "AMONG THE UNTRODDEN WAYS."

"Abusèd mortal, did you know
Where joy, heart's ease and comforts grow,
You'd scorn proud towers,
And seek them in these bowers,
Where winds perhaps our woods may sometimes shake,
But blustering care could never tempest make,
Nor murmurs e'er come nigh us,
Saving of fountains that glide by us."
SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

Mount Earnslaw Hotel, Glenorchy, January 23, 1892.

"Hail, unimagined power
That makes the real surpass the dream."

And yet why do I repeat this here? As I look out from the window of my room, I see only a patch of dried-up herbage where sober cattle graze, and beyond a wide stretch of solemn lake, banked by a bleak mountain range, on whose breast a baby glacier nestles; hardly an adequate basis upon

which to build a theory of potential enjoyment, but reliable enough for me!

I know I have only to wander round through the little wicket, and out into the road, to have my eyes gladdened, and my heart uplifted with an exceeding great delight, for there I shall see again all the glories that revealed themselves, bit by bit, as we steamed up the water from the south, when, turning the sphinx-like corner at last, it seemed that—

"Across the ivory gate of dreams Surely our bark was piloted."

Then it was we found why the waters of Lake Wakatipu were so icy cold, for peak after peak, glacier-crowned, rose up against the blue. Amidst them all, and yet aloof, by reason of his giant height, stood the noble form of Mount Earnslaw, nine thousand feet nearer the sky than we poor atoms of humanity who gazed spellbound on this monarch of mountains. At his base are no obtrusive foothills, only a wide waste of tussock, and long stretches of shingle clear away to the swampy margin of the lake.

This is the permanent picture, through all the years, for ever the same, and the unending changelessness is full of beauty.

But there is also a splendour that comes of change

alone, where the livelong day, upon his pyramid of rock and walls of slate, the heralds of light inscribe anew their fleeting message.

At early morning, sharp, incisive, clear in answer to the risen sun, flash the gleams of his frozen jewels.

In the lustrous haze of the dreaming noon, a tender, fairy film of mystery softens his rugged brow, and deepens in the drowsy heat of the breathless hours.

With evening comes the daily pageant, the everrecurring marvel of sunset, under whose influence the stately head of the great mountain stands out proudly, while the passing miracle drapes his shoulders with royal red and imperial purple, and showers upon his glittering crown the radiant glories of the prism.

Never before have I felt so strongly the deep satisfaction that is born of isolation. Here we are, to all intents and purposes, relegated to the most absolute oblivion, for this tiny place is composed of three inns, and nothing else. They are called hotels, but to me that word is unwelcome, being so suggestive of the Switzerland of to-day, on whose mountain heights, even in well-nigh inaccessible places, huge caravansaries are always perched. These inns are not full of enthusiastic tourists, and just now we seem to have the whole place to ourselves, for which we are becomingly grateful, and are enjoying to the

utmost the sense of being able to do exactly as we like without let or hindrance.

There seems an exhaustless supply of horses here, and the son of the house is going to drive us everywhere, which means everywhere possible to wheels, and having reached that limit, we must ride. Harry Birley is a celebrated pioneer in this district, and is the first and only man who has attained the summit of Mount Earnslaw; he is the discoverer of a lake and a waterfall in the neighbourhood, and we found him a most considerate and attentive guide yesterday in our long journey to the Routeburn Gorge, sixteen miles distant.

We began the day with a gracious sun and an invigorating air that was joy to breathe, and started in rather a curious fashion, with two horses, upon which we were to ride part of the way, fastened by a loose rein to each side of the pair in the shafts; it appeared an uncomfortable arrangement for all concerned, but animals, as well as men, seem content to fall in with the usual happy-go-lucky spirit that prevails in this country.

For a few miles the road was good and the scene characteristic; on our right a hillside, plentifully dotted with cabbage trees; to the left the Rees River bed, and away over the flats, Mount Earnslaw, whose

wide fields of faint blue glacier looked spectral in the morning light. Suddenly we found to our cost the good road at an end, and that we had to travel over stones and shingle, through bogs and rivers, with jolting and bumping as the order of the hour.

It is quite impossible to imagine a Colonial daunted by the customary limits that are set to wheel traffic; these only excite his contempt, and he drives gaily, and with the supremest *sang-froid*, over obstructions which would utterly appal a less practised hand.

It was not enough that we sank to our axles in a swamp, that our wheels were well-nigh inextricably mixed with shrubs and bushes along the way, that we partially slid down the almost perpendicular bank of a river, whose waters came calmly flowing in at the door; but, as a culmination to our adventures, at the farther side we must needs cross some quick-sands which lay between us and the possible safety beyond, and all this in the cause of pleasure!

For myself, I may say that long use has at last produced in me an indifference to all these things by no means natural, though it is part of the mental equipment without which strangers should not attempt to travel in this country.

At length we came to a point trackless and impracticable, and beyond this even Harry Birley did not contemplate taking the buggy, so here we "outspanned" for luncheon under the trees, and anon, leaving the carriage, we started again.

How can I hope to describe that ride, for powers of narration are limited, while the grandeur of some scenery is measureless! Would that a mere recollection could be transmuted into words, but to drag along the footworn path of details, when the mind is flying swiftly in the realm of memory and imagination, is a task too hard, and the results can but be lame and halting.

The journey up the Routeburn from the valley below is an ascent of fifteen hundred feet, and had the horses not been exceedingly sure-footed it would have been dangerous, for there were rough stones, shelving rocks, and slippery places to climb, in a track only wide enough for Indian file. Some of the windings were so precipitous that we had to lean forward till our heads almost rested on our pommels, and in other parts where our way led through the Bush, there were fallen trunks and treacherous bogs, and all manner of pitfalls. I soon found that I could have perfect confidence in my horse "Sailor," so I left the steering to him, proving him a most skilful navigator.

Into the forest we rode, where the tall, straight stems of the red and silver birches stood, close as grain in a cornfield, their branches making a welcome shade in the too-fervent heat of the still afternoon; the prying sunbeams could scarce penetrate their serried ranks except in glinting rays that shot through the thickset greenery and made the shadows darker. In the utter silence of the slumberous hours even the Tui's note was stilled, and no song echoed through the glades as we rode on filled with the glamour of the forest.

But soon a distant sound was heard, and as we advanced it swelled into a roar, then suddenly we found ourselves beside a lovely stream that dashed over huge white boulders in a long descent of surpassing beauty. As we wound up the narrow track, close bush around and above, we kept near the mountain torrent in its winding, devious way. Sometimes we saw it leaping in cascades, at others flowing in peaceful quiet, then falling again, and ever darkly blue as the profoundest sea, but sparkling and translucent to its deepest depths. And over the rocky precipices that bounded the reckless current, grew bush down close to the water's edge, while far above, and seeming to touch the very heavens, were the snow-capped pinnacles of noble mountains, picture after picture framed by branching screen and leafy shade.

Up still higher we ride, on past roaring cataract and still, blue pool, white rock and time-worn boulder,

with the fall of never-wearying water before us, and the boom of its weird thunder in our ears, while every mile of rushing river and quiet bush, glacier peak and rocky battlement, makes a distinct impression in our hearts never to be forgotten—on till we reach the haven that lies, like "sleepe after toyle," at the end of all—a mountain-guarded oasis, smooth and fair, with wild, green forest to the very verge of the grassy plateau, and away across the calm expanse, a leaping, glistening waterfall, that rises in a hidden lake among the nearer mountains.

The scene is vast and sublime, and so aloof from the haunts of man that it appears to us more like the vision of a dream than a bit of this sad, old world we know so well.

The mountains are folded in hushed repose, and over the bloomy haze that veils the distant Bush, the westering sun casts lingering shadows, faint as a web of gossamer, while higher, on the ice-peak's crown, he has suddenly flung a warm ray that rests upon, but cannot penetrate, its frozen heart.

Too bright a memory to fade, but our time was short, and we soon had to wend our way homewards by the track we had come; to return on the road we know, always fixes impressions of scenes more clearly than when we view them from one aspect alone. The difficulties, as well as the beauty of the surroundings,

increased in the descent. Near the beginning of the path, and at many points where the Bush was less dense, there were wide vistas of distant mountains, tier upon tier rising into the fathomless blue; and down in the hazy depths below, a smiling valley, through which flowed the river, with a dreamy murmur unlike the wild sound of its waters up in the roaring cataract.

The shadows were lengthening as we rode between the forest glades—

"Through buried paths where sleepy twilight dreams
The summer-time away;"

and where the sunset struck the tall tree-trunks with shafts of ruddy light.

Most of the track had been made with not even an attempt at clearing. When an unusually bulky tree had fallen across the path, a large slice had been cut out of it, and the two halves of the trunk left at each side, for in the Bush the prophecy is fulfilled, that "in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

Sometimes, in turning steep descents, we had to bend low to the saddle, to escape being decapitated by a drooping bough that hung across and barred our way; at others to lean until we were lying on our horses' backs. Verily our attitudes would have appeared like circus practice to onlookers, had there been any; nevertheless, all this is much more

pleasant than ordinary going along the Queen's highway.

January 27. "All things are fair in the track of the sun."—Gwlad has at last realized one of the ideals formed in the fervour of her imagination before coming to New Zealand. She has been out for a wild gallop with Harry Birley, riding after stock!

This has, of course, raised her in her own estimation nearer the level of the Bush heroes and heroines about whom she delights to read, and her joy is unbounded. She tells me that this really is riding, anything more conventional being too stupid and ordinary ever to be real pleasure.

I know so well what she feels: the glorious exhilaration of freedom and exercise, and that sense of delight which Nature yields those who love her haunts better than all others. When the early years have fled, and experiences of this kind become rarer, we call their joy "life;" but the child, without analyzing, accepts it as due, and knows not that the heedlessness of youth is the element that gives it the keenest zest.

Shades of English schoolrooms! and alas! for the many prim maxims often heard therein. Though doubtless some of hers are disregarded now, Gwlad does not forget those which are worthy of remem-

brance, and most of the home-inculcated habits have been followed, even where the temptation to break them has been strong.

There is, however, an "eternal difference" between the natural girl who loves air, sunshine, movement, and adventure, and the *fin-de-siècle demoiselle*, whose manners, speech, and ambitions are the products of the materialism, independence, and irreverence of this so-called progressive, nineteenth century.

There will be days enough of demure riding later; let me be thankful she will then have flashes of memory, recalling what she is pleased now to term "the real thing," and, since she knows not fear, why should I fear for her? She sits straight, and her hand is as light as her heart. I wish I could stretch grassy plains for her horse's feet, wherever she elects to guide them, and surround her with Earth's fairest in all the lands where she may rove; but, ah me! we cannot devise harmlessly the path for our dear ones, even for one little day. We can but assent and smile when a "good time" is theirs, and leave the coming years to One who cares even more than we; for when we try to make them fair, oftentimes we but mar them with ignorant endeavour.

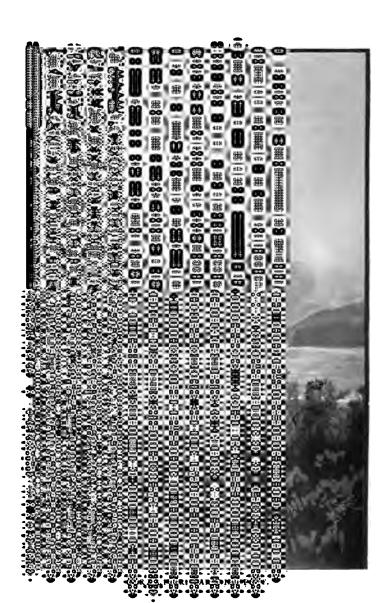
My Pegasus must be reined in; this record is fast becoming a journal about Gwlad, instead of New Zealand. Well, they are both very interesting subjects to me, and the writer of a mere diary is happily amenable to no one, and how much more irresponsible and delightful is her occupation than that of the oft-perplexed, critic-dreading author of a real book!

Birley amused me greatly yesterday by an expression he used with regard to Gwlad's walking powers. He had been telling me how sorry he was she had not been up the mountains where he and two travellers had gone the other day, to sketch the lake he discovered, and upon my suggesting that the distance would have been too great, he replied:

"Not for her, not for her; why, she could walk rings round most people."

Some friends came up here on Monday, and yesterday we had a picnic which occupied a good many hours (through Purgatory and Paradise, both well named) to Diamond and Sylvan Lakes. For the first seven miles the way was the same as to the Routeburn; then we crossed the Rees River, and our road took us round the back of Mount Alfred, if road it could be called, for it was up hill and down dale, through tussock paddocks, and stony creeks, into swamps and over shrubs, anywhere and everywhere horses that were as sure-footed as cats, and with apparently as many lives, could find space for movements or chance of egress, and at length we

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came to the Dart River, where the land rejoices in the name of Paradise Flat!

How strange it seems that though each beautiful impression has its own fixed place in the mind, and is quite separate and distinct from all others, in description there is a uniform colouring, and every succeeding one appears like a repetition of the last. This may be accounted for by the salient features of fine landscape perpetually recurring; roaring torrent, quiet lake, snow-capped mountains, and bush-draped hill, though the wonderful varieties of light and shade, and the infinitely diversified aspects of the same scene must strike even the most unobservant eye; and were it not for this eternal transformation ever at work, what a dull old world it would be!

Was it the same old world yesterday, that radiant vision from the plains of Paradise? or was it a brief glimpse into the wonderful loveliness of a blissful Hereafter? Sometimes the glories that surround this present life seem a foretaste of those we hope for in the Unseen, and how wistful is the longing that time and oblivion may never erase them wholly from the memory!

A sky of intensest blue, through which the cloud flocks wandered—

"Shepherded by the slow unwilling wind," a circling belt of snowy peaks, a nearer range

where the forests lay, a break in the Bush where the river flowed, a swift on-rushing of the pale, grey stream, and in the trancèd air the mystery of the innermost heart of summer; this is the picture of Paradise that will uplift my spirit in many a coming day, when the favours of Fate may be few.

At last we reached the edge of a wood, through which a foot-track led to Sylvan Lake, and here we rested for luncheon, and as we were a merry party our enjoyment was without a flaw,—except for sand-flies!

I wonder if there is anything else upon this earth so rapacious and at the same time so irrepressible, as the wily sand-fly?

Compared with the mosquito, who has the civility to announce his proximity by a melodious overture, this minute and poisonous atomy is a monster of deception, for he only makes his presence known by his sting, and, as this is entirely in the inverse ratio to his size, the effect is most painful and enduring. When all the surplus energy at command has been expended upon his extermination, the helpless victim is fain to retire from the field in utter desperation; for, to the funeral of their dead comrade come hosts of mourners, each filled with revenge, and with a deep-rooted desire for blood animating his diminutive being. Sand-flies and blue-bottles are the

drawbacks to perfect comfort in the Bush, which must annoy even its most fervent enthusiasts.

But these two pests are not its only denizens, for there are other aborigines as charming as they are the reverse. One of these is the white-breasted robin, an amiable and very friendly bird, whose confidence in human nature makes him an easy prey to the evillydisposed. He is of a blackish-grey colour, with a yellow-white breast, and is larger than our English robin. He partakes of food in the company of mortals with the utmost good faith, and hops about close at hand, with an assurance born of generations living in undisturbed freedom. But, alas! both he and the weka, as well as many another of the quaint and beautiful native birds, are fast disappearing, which proves that their trust in human nature is very often sadly misplaced.\*

\* "At Wellington, in New Zealand, the local Acclimatization Society have issued a satisfactory report of their last year's doings. They impartially import from Europe and from Australia animals which they deem likely to be advantageous denizens. The report states that red deer are spreading north, owing to being so much shot at by rabbiters and others. Opossums have been purchased, and liberated on the ranges behind Paraparuamu, on the Wellington and Manawatu Company's line. During the year English pheasants, Teneriffe partridges and grouse, and Virginian quail, have been purchased and liberated. The hatching of pheasant eggs has been unsuccessful, owing to a severe epidemic among the birds of ophthalmia and the gapes. The report says: 'Why

After luncheon, the more enterprising members of our party set out to walk through the forest to Sylvan Lake, tempted by the shortness of the distance, which Birley informed us was a mile, forgetting to add, "Irish."

We wandered on and on, and at length came upon the lovely lakelets, that smiled—

"With crystal mocking of the trees and sky."

The haunt of gauze-winged dragon-flies, and lonely wild-fowl, an abode of absolute quietude, encircled by glacier peaks, and begirt by unbroken forests.

And here we would fain have stayed for a time, but in a party there is always one restless member who wishes "to be trotting home again." On this occasion he was evidently of a malicious turn of mind, for he led us back by another route through a fair and smooth-looking oasis, which proved the most spongy morass, and into this, not being fairies, we

partridges do not thrive in this colony is a mystery, but the council is confident that there are drawbacks in operation against the acclimatization of these birds. Fish culture has been most successful.' The document concludes with the following prudent observations: 'Acclimatization is potent for good or ill, and it behoves us all to weigh carefully the probable result of any steps taken, and not rashly, to import to our shores any mischievous kind of life that may upset the balance of nature, and above all, to try to preserve, as far as possible, the few remaining indigenous birds once the pride of New Zealand.'"

sank deeply at every step, and found our only course was to run over it as quickly as possible.

When we were at last safely packed into the buggy, and had reached the river, we discovered that it had risen inches since morning, and was now decidedly "up." Crossing its deep current, with the water washing over our feet in the carriage, would have been disconcerting had we not by this time grown so accustomed to floods that a drive over a bare shingle bed is usually a disappointment, and the excitement of going through rivers without a boat something worth while anticipating. Gwlad, who rode, was fortunately mounted on a huge steed, though even he was often almost taken off his feet, so that I was not sorry to see her safely landed on the opposite bank.

January 29. Satisfaction.—To-morrow we are to bid adieu to this little place, where we have had so good a time that we shall ever hold it in pleasant remembrance.

Gwlad and I are going to-day for a long ride to the Lennox Falls, pioneered by Harry Birley. Gwlad will take her sketch-book, and as we shall be resting for some hours, I will try if a pencil and some manuscript paper, used on the spot, are any aid to my descriptive faculties which are so halting and inadequate when they depend on memory alone.

A wild ride it has been, through closest Bush, rivers full of enormous boulders to be climbed, and tussock paddocks riddled with rabbit-holes; supremely unconventional and certainly delightful, with a view before us that made the time appear all too short; at the end of the long valley the magnificent glaciers of Mounts Earnslaw and Ansted.

Above us a brilliant sky, about us a beautiful world, unpeopled save by the free birds, the ideal home of a heart that "pines for the silences rare."

No sound but the "whish" of a Paradise duck, and his weird "Tu-koo," as he warned his mate of the approach of the stranger; or the sad cry of a seagull balancing above us while we crossed a swollen creek and disturbed her fledglings, which she had brought from the nest to try their young powers upon its waters.

And now we have reached the fair torrent of the Lennox Falls, and I am sitting close by the lovely cascade that comes from the mountain's heart, and in two leaps loses itself in the stream below. There is bush on every side, and the rocks have their sternness softened by the mist of spray dashed from

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the roaring waters. Nearer stand two weatherworn boulders, covered with daintiest mosses of many and wondrous tints. Overhanging the tossing creek bend Ribbon-wood trees,\* with masses of soft white blossom, formed of cups like wild, white rosebuds, and these scent all the air with delicate, almond odours.

Lower down, the swift stream flows through grassy meadows, banked on one side by undulating mountains, cloud-shadowed and purple-hued; on the other with sombre bush brightened by the Rata's scarlet fire up to the glacier's edge; and beyond, a frozen heap of deepest blue, underlying the spectral chasms and torn clefts of the perpetual snows.

There are great white foamy clouds in the sky, and a halcyon beatitude in the air, while the unstaying river sings its heedless song as it whirls away in thoughtless joyousness, never troubled by forecast of its long wandering, and quiet ending in the deep cold lake, that will still its carol, and take the light and life from its laughing water for evermore.

. . . . .

And, resting here on a royal couch of pale and tender brackens, thoughts and bright visions come crowding into my mind, waking dreams of all the

\* Hoheria populnea.

glory there is in this fair world of ours, unheeded by the many, sought but by the few, to whom it is the essence of the life which sustains their drooping spirits in the peopled wildernesses of earth where the heart is most alone.

Truly, the boundless liberty of communion with Nature in her vaster temples fills us "with a sense of space, and of large symmetry that outdoes the imagination." And yet, though imagination cannot reach her limits, never is this sense so abiding in us as when, weary of the elusive quality of the world's interests, we turn to the Earth-Mother and receive her ample reward.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"FAREWELL GOES OUT SIGHING."

"I shall long for the ways of soft walking, Grown tired of the dust and the glare; And mute in the midst of much talking, Will pine for the silences rare."

Compton, February 9, 1892. To Africa and elsewhere.—On our return from the lakes, without making a détour, we spent two evenings very profitably in "Darkest Africa," with Mr. H. M. Stanley.

The renowned explorer, pioneered by the universally well-known, "much-travelled" Mr. R. J. Smythe, was on a lecturing-tour, and had arrived in Dunedin, where we were fortunate in hearing him tell of the finding of Livingstone and his rescue of Emin.

These subjects, being personal records, were deeply interesting to us, and we could not help appreciating how potent to a man who has lived, and not merely existed, every hour of his days, must be the memories of the long-protracted, forced marches through the unending hush and twilight of the trackless forest,

and how galling the bitterness of his innumerable disappointments, mingled as these were with the knowledge that the mind can never again be free from the influence of years in which the chattering world had neither lot nor part.

As a form of entertainment for a miscellaneous audience, I think lectures are sometimes unappreciated because of being considered one-sided and didactic; but to judge from the rapt attention shown by the listeners of Dunedin, they appeared to have a profound desire for greater light upon the subject of the Dark Continent.

From the train the tussock paddocks looked more parched than ever, and the great, bleak shingle beds, thirsty and bare enough to merit the remark, made by an American who was crossing one of the very lengthy constructions that span these usually dried-up watercourses. With the ready wit of his observant race, he said to a fellow-passenger:

"Wa'al, stranger, I guess your Government will either have to sell this bridge or hurry up and buy a river!"

Though it is only a few days since we returned home, there are already vast inundations over a great part of the south country. The long drought has come to a sudden end, and its requiem is the plash of raging waters in tempestuous discord. The liberated spirits of torrent and flood have joined issue with the powers of the air, and against this mighty league beast and mortal have fought their fight in vain.

The Rakaia River, two miles wide, is "bank to bank," and the crops from numerous fields are calmly floating about in localities where the best efforts of agriculture could never have produced them.

I wonder if I shall ever go again to the fair City of the South. In these last months a fondness which once I should have thought impossible has grown up in my heart for all the scenes that have now become familiar and homelike, and so strong is this feeling, sometimes I have to assure myself that various reasons make it incumbent on us to return to England; yet because it is not entirely imperative, notwithstanding the ever-present desire to see those from whom we have been parted so long, I am in many minds. I think I will leave the decision to the ruling of Fate, though she is only considered benign when she orders events which are desired.

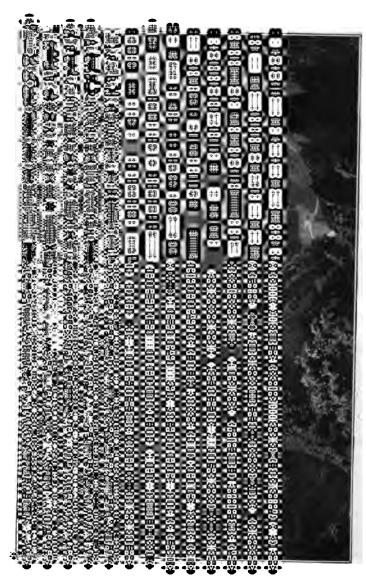
"I would I were the happy wind,
That still is free to follow
His heart about the world, to find
The summer and the swallow."

As we know not to what undreamt-of joy, or sorrow, we may be hastening, perhaps it is wiser to take the year as it comes, without trying to arrange it to suit a Sybarite love of sunshine and comfort.

This place has been home to us, but as home means hearts, not walls, it may be possessed in any latitude; and treading its enchanted ground, it matters little whether we inhabit a "lordly pleasure-house" or the "lowly thatched cottage" of the immortal song. At all events, it pleases us to imagine that we are untouched in this by material concerns; but, alas! for that same love of congenial environment which is the part of our nature most rarely satisfied.

B. wants me to go with him over to Otira, accompanied by our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell, and Mr. Rheinecker. We hear that the magnificence of the Rata there this season is so great as to be almost phenomenal. The universal display of bloom occurs at intervals, two or three years, or even more, coming between what are called the "Rata years." In other summers the ruddy flush of its blossom is seen in patches here and there, like solitary campfires amidst the sombre bush; on the more rare occasions, the forests are ablaze, the hillsides covered,





OTIRA GORGE.

one vast conflagration, a heaven-born flame that has no evil in its glow.

I wonder if those in high places who have the control of such matters, ever think of the invaluable heritage this unique manifestation is to New Zealand?

Truly a matchless treasure that should be most zealously guarded. I fear that Women's Rights, and Native Wrongs, fill too exclusively the time devoted to legislation, some of which might perchance be more satisfactorily employed in making laws to prohibit stupid and mischievous actions. The gradual cutting-down for road-mending (and for his own use) of the Rata trees, in the Otira Gorge, by the man who occupies the unsightly little cottage there, which so effectually mars the landscape, is one of the evils which I would offer as a suggestion for immediate attention.

But, woe is me! politics are not my forte. I am only riding my hobby again, which is not of the slightest use, for, as the saying is here, I shall have to "eat my Tutu," and be very glad if it does not poison me, for to utter a protest is to beat the air.

February 17. Rata and Rain.—How cruel Fate can be; especially the Fate who rules the weather! We went across to Otira on the twelfth, and returned

on the fifteenth, and had not one fine moment the whole time. The dogged perseverance of the rain would have been amusing if we had found it less disagreeable.

Could anything have compensated for lack of sunshine, it would surely have been that glory of Rata in the Gorge. The flower that singly is insignificant in size, and in shape resembles a stiff little brush, in mass is ennobled, great waves of crimson rolling over the olive foliage in a floodtide of splendour. Bedecked with the forest's verdure alone, the sequestered valley had seemed to need no added charm; but under this brighter aspect, solemn wood and silent mountain were transfigured, and the vital touch bestowed that is only given by brilliant colour.

My birthday, spent at Otira, might have been the feast of Jupiter Pluvius instead of Saint Valentine, so continuous and hopeless was the downpour, and our friends, to whom the scenery was new, were naturally somewhat disappointed. No amount of good nature could make the weather less uncompromising, for no dispersing of the grey vapours let one ray of sunshine through, to cheer us with promise of a change; so we returned as we had gone, but with the memory of that regal bloom, half veiled by baffling and persistent rain.

February 24. Castles in Spain.—In this journal I believe I have never even mentioned Sumner, our pleasant, little, seaside resort, though it ought to have a page quite to itself, because people seem to consider it a watering-place of some importance, which it could never become, its possibilities and space being too limited. As it is only eight miles from Compton, we often ride or drive down there for a few hours, and the breath of free air compensates for the rather tedious journey.

Great rocks stand about the tiny bay, and the big rollers tumble on to the beach and upset the children's sand mounds, just as absolutely as they have been doing in the old world since "Adam delved and Eve span."

I wonder sometimes that the babies do not lose heart over this dispiriting occupation (the sea is so ruthless), though by no chance do they ever build beyond his reach, proving that they expect the destruction that follows, in which anticipation they are more far-sighted than the children of a larger growth, who fondly imagine the fair erections they raise are aloof from risk of demolition, and so have to suffer doubly, for, with the sapping of frail foundations, many an ideal is engulfed, that, unlike the enterprising architecture on the shore, never can be reared again.

How far into the dim Unknown may thought travel from the base of a castle in sand, but it is good to come back to the happy little diggers, who hopefully plod along and never acknowledge defeat!

When I lie awake at nights, I listen to the moaning of the bar at Sumner, and to me the sound is always so wild and eerie, it might be the wail of drowning men; but as I stand beside the wooing sea the moan has died away, and there is only left the gladness in sunny skies and the joy of a rippling tide.

B. has gone down to Coldstream to stay with our good friend Mr. Studholme, and to fish in the Rangitata. I know he will enjoy this visit, as he could scarcely fail to do with the congenial host, whose name is connected in our minds with so many of the pleasantest days here, that to us the words Studholme and New Zealand seem almost synonymous.

March 13. "If doughty deeds my lady please."— For the last few days we have been quite absorbed in the rather headlong game of Polo, a very favourite pastime in the Colony. Some members of the Auckland Club came down to play against the various teams here, and there have been several most interesting matches.

It is said that the ponies enjoy the sport as much as their riders, and although there are doubtless moments when, their limbs receiving the stroke that should have sent the ball speeding, it may by them be considered an equivocal pleasure, still, on the whole, the alert, little creatures seem to enter into the spirit of the amusement with a vast amount of eagerness.

Yesterday was a field-day, a culmination to the matches, and a series of polo sports were held on the Riccarton Racecourse, when, as most of the competitors were known to us, our interest was considerably heightened. There were Bending, Hurdle, and Polo-ball contests; and one of the events, a Tandem race, was very exciting, reminding us of descriptions of the Chariot races of the Roman era. In this, each competitor had two ponies, one of which he rode, driving the other by long white reins, and, as these were the only attachments, the manipulation required no little skill. The ponies were all fidgety, and the great difficulty was to coax them to the starting-point, and when that was accomplished, to get them off. Most of the leaders were inclined to turn round and gaze at their drivers, a trick which occasioned much entanglement.

At last they were ready and off, and two pairs shooting forward made a splendid race. Some never

got away at all, and others broke the reins and started on their own account; and one of these, making his escape, was not heard of for several days!

The Needle-threading race, for the bracelet, was very laughable. A number of ladies, who had each chosen a champion, stood behind a row of hurdles; these champions, at a given signal, had to gallop to a distant post, each with an immense needle and a long ribbon in his hand, then to ride back to the hurdles, jump off his pony, holding out the ribbon and needle to his fair nominator. Here was proved the old saying that "the race is not always to the swift," for unfortunately the excitement of the ladies made them so nervous that the ribbon in some cases refused to go through the eye, until one, more lucky in this than the others, had almost reached the winning-post with the threaded needle held triumphantly in his hand.

I think the most amusing of all was the race in which the riders, before starting, had each to light a cigar and to open a Japanese parasol, and to come back to the winning-post smoking the cigar, and with the parasol unfurled; this was not so easy as it looked, for at the finish most of them were in tatters.

We very rarely meet any residents of Auckland so far south, and it has been pleasant to hear something of that portion of these islands which seems as remote as though it were in another sphere. It is odd that a town, so recently the seat of Government, should now have become strange to the rest of the Colony, but so it is; Wellington, Christchurch, and Dunedin are always en rapport, but Auckland appears distant and separate.

From "Oceana" I gather Mr. Froude's opinion was, that after having seen Auckland he was able to form a pretty good idea of New Zealand, which opinion is, I think, as erroneous as would be the impression of an individual coming to the British Isles and only touching at Aberdeen.

## Compton, April 6.

"Until a man might travel twelve stout miles Or reap an acre of his neighbour's corn."

B. and I have just returned from a brief visit to our friends Sir John and Lady Hall, at their beautiful place on the Hororata, where we again found luxurious hospitality "far from the madding crowd." At the end of our drive from the little wayside station, was a long, low-roofed, and (for this very juvenile land) old house covered with creepers, from the veranda of which was a wide view of gently rolling downs.

Our host, who is one of the leading politicians of New Zealand, has a very valuable library, by no means limited to Blue Books. In the House of Representatives he is a most ardent champion of Woman's Suffrage, and it is mainly through his unwearied efforts, on behalf of this cause, that it is in a fair way to become law. It may be a change for the better, but that still remains to be proved. Certainly it seems hard that women should be deprived of a privilege which some of them consider so desirable.\*

Picnics and drives occupied our time most agreeably at Hororata, and a continuation of these endless plains was thus disclosed to us. Sometimes our excursions led us through sheep-paddocks, three to five thousand acres in extent, where the opening of gates was not a very frequent necessity, the distance between these, in one instance, being five miles.

I am glad that our last visit should have been to so pleasant a country house, and the thought of the geniality and kindness of its inmates will be one link the more to add to the ever-lengthening chain that will bind us in memory to the land we are so soon to leave.

<sup>\*</sup> Universal suffrage in New Zealand now includes both men and women (1894).

Easter Day, April 17.—I have been trying so hard not to feel sorrowful on this anniversary, that should be only the earnest of hope and unending gladness; but because it is my last Sunday here, fate and circumstance have been too much for me, and the sadness has overcome the joy.

As I sat this morning in our little, country church, where the sunlight glinted upon the fair flowers in aisle and chancel, and the welcome voice of our good Archdeacon Cholmondeley told us again, in earnest tones, the old, old story that is yet so new, my heart was full of the thought that ere another Sabbath dawns, we shall be out upon the path that leaves no track, leagues distant from the quiet, little sanctuary, that has ever been to me truly a place wherein to worship.

And this afternoon our wonted saunter in the garden and through the paddocks, as well as the sight of the dear, familiar trees and flowers, and of the creatures that come at our call, and have been associated with so many of our pleasures, seemed almost more than Gwlad and I could bear, with the knowledge that not only were we leaving these things, but also the one who is so much more to us, and who has made our life here so happy; for, after all, B. finds that the press of his work will occupy him a few months longer, and that he cannot

possibly go with us to England. This is a disappointment too deep for words, and it has doubly intensified to me the dread of the long voyage.

We have not even the satisfaction that we are to sail in a well-known vessel, for the Ruahine (the latest steamer of the New Zealand Shipping Company) has just been constructed, and she came here immediately after her trial trip. We have been down to Lyttelton, and had luncheon on board with Captain Greenstreet, and were greatly disappointed with her appearance, though she will doubtless be very comfortable. She is huge and uncouth, and, with her two masts and enormous funnel, ugly enough to merit most deservedly the very literal nickname of "Beef-tub" with which she has been rechristened. Fortunately for us, the deck cabins are capacious, and the saloon light and cheerful, with a big fireplace and cosy ingle-nook; and, as we hope to spend the voyage inside the steamer, it will not greatly matter to us what her aspect is from the sea.

If we spring a leak, and have to take to the boats, we shall certainly have no time for the critical mood.

So many friends have come to express regret at our departure, but no visit has touched me more than that of the revered and aged Bishop Harper,\* who is so universally and deservedly beloved. At one time he was bishop of a greater part of this Island, and afterwards his see was Christchurch, until—since our arrival—he resigned it to our muchesteemed and hard-working Bishop Julius.

"Oh fair, blue hills, Your tender line, like music thrills My longing, home-sick soul to-day."

I dare not look long through my windows over the trees where lie the ramparts of that range I love so well, for memory rises up to veil the sight, and the dear accustomed scene is blotted out by a mist of regretful tears. But, as B. sometimes says, I must "pull myself together, and try to see the brighter side," if only it were not so hard to discover.

Sister Hope is sweetest, fairest
Of Heaven's daughters, loved the best.
Though her presence is the rarest,
And with us she will not rest;
For she comes, and solace bringing,
Touches but our tearful eyes,
Then, with lightsome foot up-springing,
Breathes her farewell from the skies.

<sup>•</sup> I grieve that this was our last meeting, for Bishop Harper has since passed away (1894).

Sister Sorrow, in our anguish,
Closely folds us to her heart,
But in her embrace we languish,
For with Love she bids us part;
Envies us our joy and gladness,
And with firm, unfaltering hand,
Leads us through a sea of sadness,
To Oblivion's dreary strand.

Sister Memory is the dearest,
Truest friend we hold through life,
Never failing, ever nearest,
In our peace, and in our strife.
Even sorrow's hours are fleeting,
Hope, but for a summer day,
Folds her wings to give us greeting:
Memory comes alone to stay.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## "I HAVE WHAT I HAVE."

"To the fancy there is nothing so winsome as a white sail seaward blown,—unless it be a white sail homeward bound, its voyage happily done."—LEW WALLACE.

April 22, 1892. At sea. "The web of our life is a mingled yarn, good and ill together."—It is all over, and out across the wide ocean to the horizon, however far the eye can pierce, there is no faintest streak of the land we left in the gloom of midnight. Perhaps it was better to have been so, the welcome veil of darkness hid the scenes that had been dear to us in brighter hours, and covered from sight the sorrow that would not be denied.

Why should I linger over the parting when the pain is still so keen as to make the future seem a blank? for, while this elusive element rolls beneath, and the far, grey Unknown stretches beyond, the present is more than enough for me.

We are living through a day that we do not find in any almanac, which has been evolved out of the inner consciousness of the captain specially for us—as though seven times twenty-four, multiplied by six, would not make a sufficient sum-total of dreary hours to be lived through "for one trip." As the *Ruahine* is crossing the 180th parallel, we have to adjust our easting by tacking on an extra Friday to a calendar already too lengthy; and, I presume, Friday, to evidence the ship's supreme indifference to a time-honoured superstition.

April 28. Aimless, helmless, and alone.—Great excitement prevailed amongst the passengers this morning at sight of a huge iceberg on our port bow. It looked about six or seven miles distant, and although the spectacle was decidedly novel to many of us, I imagine no one desired to make a closer inspection.

With what varied feelings such a sight is regarded by the different individuals on board ship! To those in the saloon it is a delightfully picturesque interlude in the dead level of their monotonous voyage; to the sailors, I fear, only a fresh opportunity for the airing of that strong language to which they are occasionally addicted. As the vicinity of icebergs necessitates the doubling of watches, their invectives may be more readily excused to-day.

Personally I am very well satisfied with the strange and somewhat eerie entertainment.

This immense pyramid, which might have seemed like some forgotten island, but for its look of baselessness and mystic unreality, had upon its sloping walls, the dazzling sunshine which glittered and scintillated until the colossal, white thing grew dim and faint, and at last dwindled into a mere speck on the horizon.

I do not wish to see any more icebergs; the risk of danger in their proximity far exceeds the pleasure they yield, and at best they are spectral and unresponsive associates on a lonely sea.

April 30. As merry as the day is long.—There are, in the saloon, seven girls, including Gwlad (all about the same age), who are going home for education; and the chief officer has dubbed this bevy the "Mosquito Fleet," which name has degenerated into "Skeeters." If the very exciting, snowball fight they had the other day, and the wild games of "Twos and Threes"—into which most of the passengers are generally entrapped—are things to judge by, I fancy that, as regards noise, we shall have a pretty lively passage; without this little coterie

there is no doubt it would lack brightness and fun.

I am endeavouring to coach the "Skeeters" in a little play they have been asked to act, but the rehearsals are conducted under great difficulties, for it is almost more than can be expected of even a professional to look natural, much less tragic, with arms flung wildly out to clutch some immovable support, and wayward limbs staggering through the steps of an involuntary rigadoon. The only character that can be portrayed to the life on a rolling ship is that of a helpless inebriate, and such a performance could hardly be considered edifying.

We have been promised, if the weather keeps clear, to be taken through the Straits of Magellan; this will be an immense pleasure, for I have heard so much of the beauty and grandeur of the scenery, though the steamers make their way sometimes in narrows where the navigation is both difficult and dangerous.

May Day. "These are the times that try men's souls."—There is not the faintest hint of sweet May in the air to-day, for a keen and bitter wind and a rough-and-tumble sea are our only portions.

As we gather about the Mercator chart on the

companion, and view with apprehension the long line of our probable course, dotted as yet so sparely with the small, red crosses which indicate our daily quota of knots, some one remarks that we are so far south there is a decided feeling of dropping over the edge of the globe! Certainly the temperature is polar enough to remind us of the very near proximity of the Antarctic Circle.

Already I am utterly weary of the routine of this voyage.

It is impossible to isolate one's self; people are on every side, and we have all seen quite enough of each other—at least, I think we have.

I have a growing impression that the second class or steerage would afford more suggestion, and the fo'castle would undoubtedly be more amusing. "Jack" never fails to interest me; his absence of pretentiousness is generally the key to his character, and the diversion of watching him at work sometimes surpasses that obtained from "talking an infinite deal of nothing" to one's fellow-passengers. It often occurs to me that, were our conversations sifted, the ideas they contain would be like Gratiano's reasons, "as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff; you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them they are not worth the search." I suppose that the lack of our usual occupations is the secret

of there being so much wasted time, and, if we are to accept the trite aphorisms of Dr. Watts, this is ever Satan's golden opportunity.

May 3.—Alas! to-day the wind has changed, rain and mists are about us, so our course has to be altered, and the proposed route through the Straits is abandoned for that round Cape Horn. I am quite aware that it would have been madness in such weather to attempt the navigation of this anchorless sound, but at present I can feel nothing but regret, for I had been looking forward to it with all the eagerness of a child to a promised holiday.

We must comfort ourselves with the thought that probably we are reserved for a better fate than to be food for fish in Patagonian waters.

May 5. At the edge of the world.—This morning at dawn the Captain's boy came to me with the message that land was in sight, and such news, together with the view from my port, drove from my mind all idea of more slumber; so I dressed quickly, and was amply rewarded for the unusual exertion of beginning the day at that early hour.

The indefiniteness of dawn and the exquisite view of a series of lovely islands after so long a distance of perpetual ocean, made it all appear like a mirage evolved from a dream, and I had to assure myself over and over again that I was awake, and that before me lay a range of real hills covered up in snow, which the rising sun was painting with a blush of palest rose.

For hours we have been steaming along under the lee of the land, so close that we could clearly distinguish the bright green mosses that clothe each jutting rock on the rough promontory of Cape Horn, which seems to me like the "Finis" on the last page of the world's log.

. . . . .

In the haze of a wonderful sunset, torn with wild storm clouds, we have made our way through the Straits of Le Maire, and in the flickering twilight the Falkland Islands, faint and indistinct, loomed darkly on our starboard bow.

So now we have literally turned the corner, and our course at last is set to the northward.

We have begun badly, with a high wind and head sea, a conjunction of circumstances which affords a favourable opportunity for the *Ruahine* to execute various elephantine and most unwelcome gambols.

May 12.—I cannot forget that we are daily passing, though unseen, a land of sublime grandeur, glamour,

and romance, the pages of whose history are stained with fierce cruelty and darkest tragedy; where Nature's moods vie with those of man, and find their expression in poison of plant, and fang of glittering snake; in the lurking horror that broods over lonely swamps, and the noiseless tread of the striped danger that crouches in the forest's ambush: a land of physical and social earthquakes, of memory and hope, but of a bitter present, governed by incompetence and peopled by schemers; and yet withal, a continent of such vast resource, such unlimited, and, it almost seems, supernatural grandeur, that human actions, though ofttimes so destructive, are powerless to divest it of true nobility, while even its so-called eternal monuments of barbaric splendour are dwarfed into insignificance by the side of gigantic mountain, sea-like river, unending plain, and trackless forest; whose myriad, winged habitants, and gorgeous, tropic blooms, rival the hues of gems in Eastern palaces.

And to-morrow we shall reach the key to this Wonder-country, Rio—the harbour of the world!

After Rio. May 15. "Framed in the prodigality of Nature."—How is it possible to carry away a detailed impression of this kaleidoscopic town after so brief

a sojourn as twenty-four hours? There is left with me only an abiding memory of vivid colour—colour everywhere, from the many-tinted walls of dwellings and churches, to the brilliant sky and glittering sea; from the waving palms that surround the domes and minarets of the Custom House, to the bright turbans and gaudy attire of the black population; from the ugly green and yellow ensign that floats from the port, to the flaunting lines of streamers that drape each narrow street, and hang from casement and balcony; for we chanced on a holiday, and the gay cosmopolitan city was all agog on the anniversary of the emancipation of slaves in Brazil.

We steam into the beautiful harbour, past the islands that guard the entrance, and, for a moment, I know how felt the "Noble Brotherhood of the Rose," when, with straining eyes, they gazed upon the New World, and with "the realm of wonder and fable... around them, ... fell on their knees and gave God thanks."

Since they struggled and suffered, hoped and despaired, many wanderers have realized their earthly paradise on these southern shores, and, from the word-painting of Columbus and Raleigh, to the humbler notes of the latest traveller, there have been

endless descriptions penned in every tongue, so that nothing is left for me, save to echo the words of the noble author of "Westward Ho!" and say, "What Humboldt's self cannot paint, we will not try to daub."

So much has been written in glowing terms upon the gigantic mountains and dense tropic forests, on the lovely islands and picturesque bays; but still the subtle charm is ever lacking, and the indefinite power of beauty that is seen is lost in the very attempt at reproduction, therefore, I will leave the surroundings, and Gavia, the sleeping giant, shall be undisturbed, while we penetrate the beautiful town, which, in his silent dreams, he guards so well.

Even at the landing-stage we experience countless pleasures from sight and hearing; alas! that there should be another sense as acute as these, which is as fully, though more involuntarily, employed.

I was forcibly reminded of the old story of the stranger who spent a night in an English town, and, next morning, angrily exclaimed: "They may well call the place Stony Stratford, for I never was so bitten in my life." The point of this narrative has never yet been discovered, but its relevancy to the present case is obvious, for I am sure the irate visitor at Stony Stratford would have said Rio had received its name from being the most malodorous

town on the face of the earth. In this respect, Cologne is the best-abused city I know, but its exhalations are as the perfumes of Araby compared with those of the capital of Brazil!

Thirty "Ingleese," sheltering themselves behind huge smelling-bottles, must have been a somewhat ludicrous sight, and it may possibly have occurred to the natives that we had all escaped from the large building that stands in one of the bays, which a communicative Portuguese described to the captain, as the "Fool House."

The passengers divide themselves into parties, with a settled destination in view, and then promptly lose each other—an excellent plan!

There is always the exciting sensation that the yellow-fever bacillus is prowling round, ready to pounce on us, and this gives an exhilarating interest to the place, and makes us feel brave; for we all like to "assume a virtue, even if we have it not."

We first make our way to the Ruo do Ouvidor, the favourite promenade, wherein no wheels are permitted to roll. Here the crowds are concentrated, and it is bewildering to thread the maze of pleasure-seekers, and almost impossible to fix the eye sufficiently long on any one object to be able to carry away a clear idea of it; only a general impression is gleaned of the varied and bizarre assemblage, in

which negroes predominate, whose raiment outvies the many-coloured coat of the historic Israelite. Grotesque figures, pranked out in turbans and beads, loosely fitting garments and quaint-looking sandals, passed before me in dazzling succession.

That the dwellers in this polyglot city have well-defined characteristics must be evident to all strangers, and, amongst these, their loud voices and incessant gesticulation are especially noticeable; while, in common with the inhabitants of all semi-tropic countries, these Children of the Sun unconsciously rejoice in his beneficence, and whether at work or play, their feet tread dancing measures, because their hearts are light.

Has any one ever been to Rio without ascending the Corcovado? If so, he would almost deserve canonization, for having strength of mind to resist the sheep-like habit of those who follow in flocks wherever they are "personally conducted."

Not that I desire for one moment to infer that Corcovado is not, of all places, the one that should be visited, only it would be a delightful surprise to discover a mountain summit now, that human foot had never trod.

I can well understand dear old Jim's feeling when he saw the noble peak of Naiguatà, in the land of Bolivar (which even Humboldt had not scaled), and knew that its spire had appealed in vain to the climbing powers of the easeful people of Venezuela, many of whom loved Jim so well they would have followed him in an attempt to get to the moon!

What I would have given to have been with him when, after two days of terrible endurance, he and his party at last mastered the peak! Though he described his excessive thirst, and the longing to sleep in the blazing sunlight, as maddening sensations, he forgot all about the physical pain very soon, but never forgot the glory of the scene—the world of beauty that reached to every horizon.

I suppose, being the sister of a man who could not be daunted by an almost sheer precipice of 9430 feet is something, and I know the Alpine Club would not make me a member as they made him, so I must be content to go, with the sheep-like crowd, up to Corcovado, and keep to the beaten tracks, save when I can steal out of them with a good grace—and not too many companions!

After all, perhaps the view from the summit of this railway-ridden mountain was not the less charming that we had not made a toilsome ascent to gain it; the dense forests along our route that in summer would be gay with orchids, as we returned in the gathering darkness were bright with myriad glittering fireflies.

Next morning, wishing to "do" everything, we thought the market which adjoins the wharf would make a good beginning, but here the prevailing characteristic of Rio is rampant, for, in addition to the normal smells, there are those of fish and vegetables in every condition.

Hosts of traffickers crowd around, from the curious white-haired negroes, to the picturesque, half-nude pickaninnies, who look like animated bronze Cupids.

As we wound our way amidst the motley throng, of the many striking sights, none charmed me more than that of a lugger moored alongside, filled to the gunwale, and piled high with enormous pumpkins of every shade of mellow green, and sunny yellow, for it was such an evidence to me of the open hand of Nature under these brilliant skies.

One picture of the streets of Rio which remains indelible in my mind, is of distracted, little groups of *Ruahine* passengers, tearing hither and thither in the rain, hailing already-full trams with the wild expectation of being taken anywhere and everywhere, in the space of two hours.

Of course we go to the Botanical Gardens, not, I fear, anticipating what we should see, but that we may be able to talk glibly of the beauties of Rio. During the rather long drive of seven miles, we were simply bewildered with unfamiliarity, colour still everywhere,

and of such glorious tints, that winter here appears like a page out of the "Arabian Nights." Every house seems to be surrounded by an enchanted garden, where gorgeous hibiscus flowers bloom on tree-like shrubs, and flame-hued coleus and crotons, which in the northern clime are tended in infancy as delicate children, here, in their native soil, need no special care save what is given by a gracious sun and genial air.

At last we came to the Botanical Gardens, which, notwithstanding the perfunctory nature of our visit, we can say we have "done," and even the brief glimpse he has had must prevent the most superficial of "globe-trotters" from ever confusing them with any other Botanical gardens elsewhere, though having to hasten back to Rio was to me as tantalizing as the stroke of twelve to the magically-transported heart of Cinderella.

Who that has seen it can ever forget that stately avenue of noble monarchs, those royal palms which are the finest of their species in the world? So, evidently, thought the ubiquitous devotee of the Kodak from our ship, who planted his diminutive apparatus right in the range of our vision, so that in future years, when we recall these magnificent trees, we shall be also haunted by the memory of this inglorious impersonation of one of the enthusiasms of the epoch.

The Kodak has doubtless often most satisfactory results, and the only serious objection I have to it is a certain obtrusiveness which seems discordant in places where nothing is ever seen that suggests amateur effort.

The sheep-driven mood still lasting, even while the Ruahine's whistle is warning us, we tear to Madame Natté's and spend our last available sovereign in accumulating useless feather mementoes, for which gifts our long-suffering friends at home will, one and all, appear becomingly grateful, while inwardly pitying our taste, and commiserating themselves—its victims! Even with the remembrance of having been recipients of similar offerings, we are as frantically anxious about the choice of the trifles as though we were deciding on a life-career.

Mid-Ocean, May 22. Full stop.—Various are the conjectures about this long break-down; it is now eight hours since we stopped, and the sensation was altogether disagreeable, and is still insecure. Every one is grumbling, and even "Jack" says, in a somewhat discontented voice: "Ain't it lively to be awallopin' about 'ere like a sick duck?"

I wonder what is really the matter? We have heard no more reliable reason for the delay than one offered

by a very knowing passenger, who suggested that "The lid must have come off the cylinder!" And with this reassuring explanation we are fain to be content, especially as the information has just been given that in an hour we shall start once more.

Off Teneriffe, May 28. Round the world.—I feel that now we have reached this island I can truly say I have been round the world, and it gives me a certain amount of satisfaction; though when I remember that Captain Greenstreet has "circumnavigated the globe" more than forty times, mine seems a poor little record indeed.

We have had a tennis tournament, American fashion, which means a long contest, and, in our case, ninety-nine games were played, all in the tropics! We have also had a fancy ball, and a concert at which the "Toy Symphony" was performed, and after it was over I was asked to present the prizes to the successful competitors in the sports, held since leaving Rio. The health officer of Teneriffe has refused us permission to land here because we have been to the home of yellow-fever, and so we have in patience to possess our souls till Plymouth is in sight.

## In the Channel, June 2.

"The dewy, meadowy morning breath
Of England blown across her ghostly wall."

Surely it was only yesterday we left this smiling harbour of Plymouth, with tearful eyes and wondering conjecture about the goal of our voyage? Glowing sun and glittering sea, and the fair blue cloud-flecked sky are all unchanged, and, despite my knowledge of the lapse of time, I could have almost cheated myself into believing that the last three years were but a dream, when my reverie was suddenly interrupted by a New Zealand girl's voice exultantly exclaiming: "I've learnt all about this place already, and that hill over there is the Earl of Edgcumbe's run!"

My daydreams vanished!

Under the trees again.—If it were not that B. is still in the island that is once more at the other side of my world, how good a country sweet, familiar old England would seem, for the glamour of past years is upon me, and the love of the dear, familiar faces and scenes, stronger than ever. But this is a record of the land "where summer has no date," and

though the climate of my childhood's home is better than calumny has painted, its heat and cold have well-defined limits, and, alas! here we do not gather rose clusters from gardens at Christmas, nor green figs from trees on Saint Valentine's Day. However, climate alone does not yield all the heart needs, and, for her children returning from exile, England has compensations quite apart from degrees of temperature.

Adventurers bring home thrilling tales as the result of their wanderings; fortune-seekers are generally burdened either with gold or disappointment, sometimes both; explorers have usually unlimited histories of dangers and difficulties, as dramatic as they are incredible, and there is an ancient story, quite unique, of one who went out to search for asses, and found—a kingdom!

I am much happier and richer too, than any of these. I planned no definite search, and was anxious to bring nothing back save memories; and, indeed, have I not sailed home with a goodly argosy?—treasures, too, that can neither be lost nor stolen.

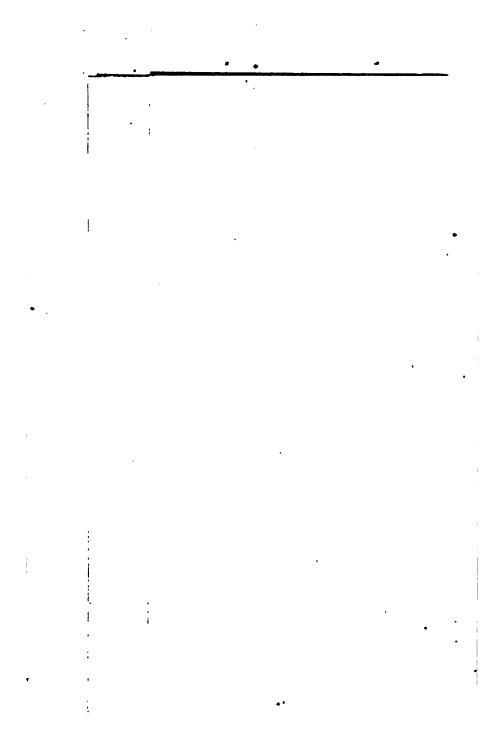
Comparatively I was always indifferent about other possessions; for it seemed then, as it does still,

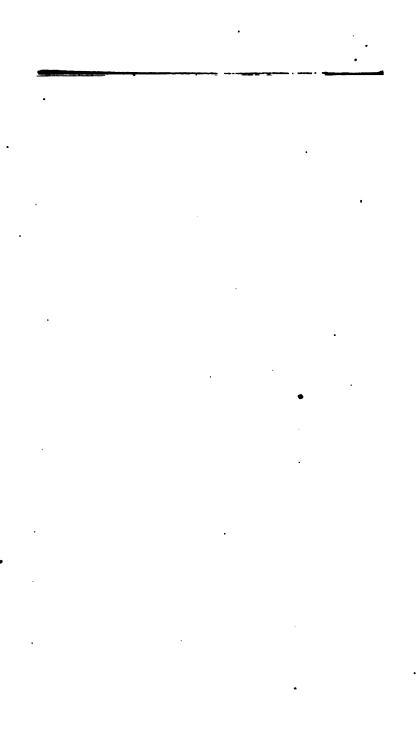
that if we three were together in our comings and goings, whether things increased or diminished, could never greatly matter to me.

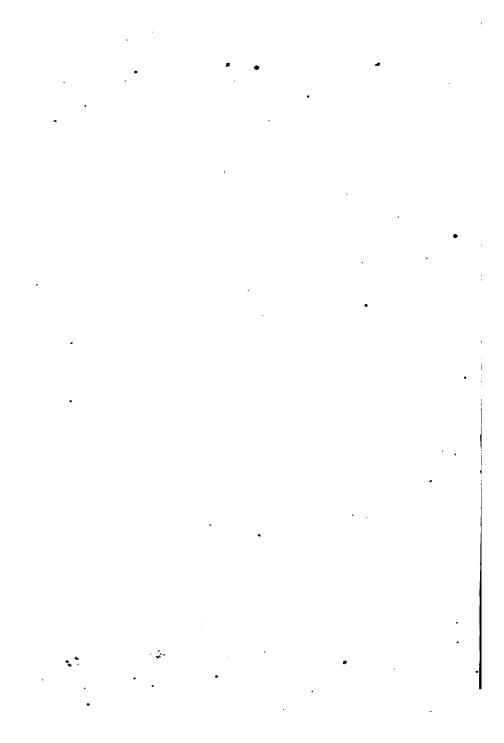
Months later.—B. has returned, and now it is really home again. How happy we are!

Where next?

THE END.







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